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Grey Raigs



OR
"Auld Lang Syne"



BY
SAM L. WATSON.



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GREY CRAIGS.

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"William Martin and his apprentice Davie Gordon were already at work."
—Page 21.

GREY CRAIGS

OR

"AULD LANG SYNE."

BY

JEAN L. WATSON,

AUTHOR OF "BYEGONE DAYS," "ROUND THE GRANGE FARM," AND
JOINT AUTHOR OF "SONGSTRESSES OF SCOTLAND," ETC.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side."

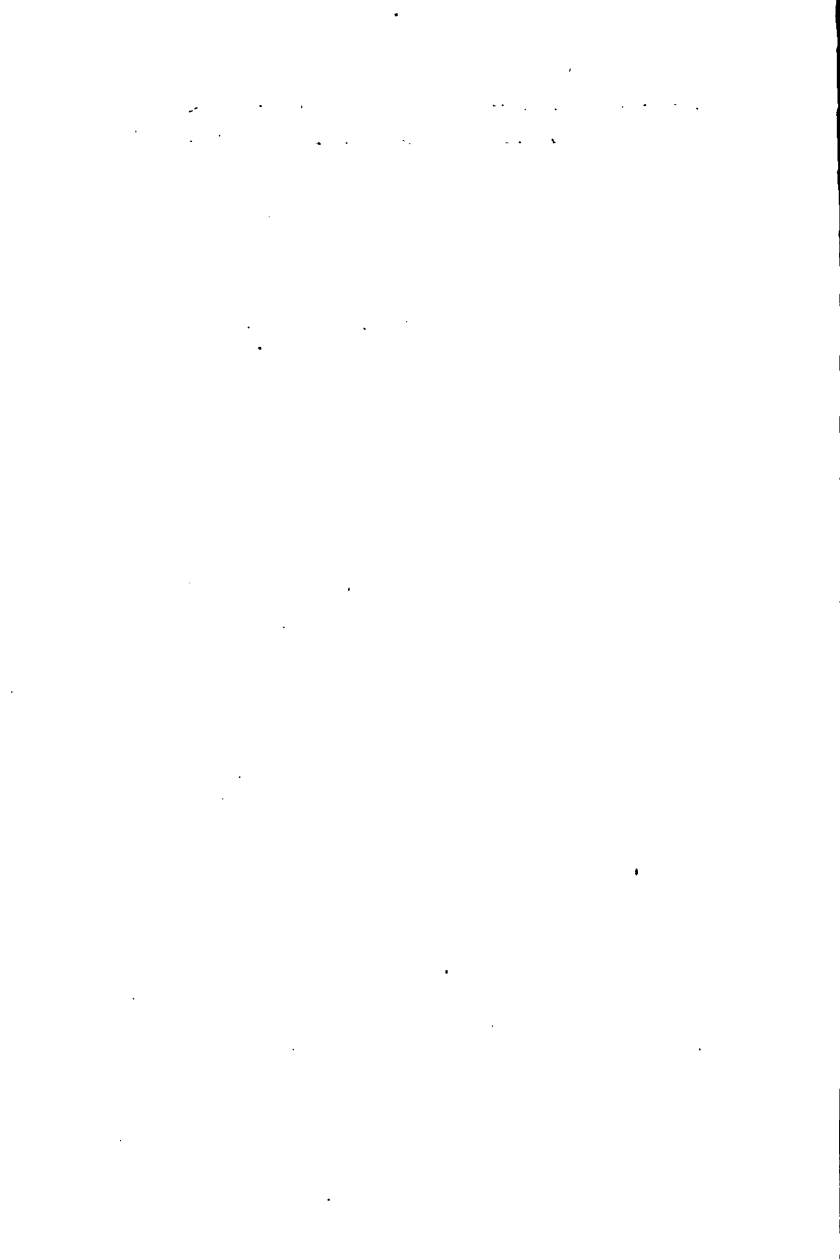


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IN
Remembrance of Sunny Days
IN A
FREE KIRK MANSE,
TO
THOSE WHO MADE THEM SUCH.

GREY CRAIGS.



CHAPTER I.

“The land where girt by friend or foe,
A man may speak the thing he will.”

—TENNYSON.



THE inhabitants of the little seaport town of Grey Craigs were a people rich in that individuality of character which forms in its possessor strong lights and deep shadows. Honest they were, for the salt virtue of the sea seemed to have implanted in their nature a love of fair play and downright-heartedness in word and deed, which caused them to speak as they believed, and to act as they spoke.

Independent, for in general they were well to do in the world, either owning their own houses, or by steady industry having gained a competency, they possessed a freedom of manner and gait seldom acquired by those who struggle against poverty; and

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so if a stranger passed them as they lounged in the summer evenings by their doors, or sat on the rocks discoursing gravely on the evils of the times, the chance is not one of the group would touch his hat, or even pull the short black pipe from his lips if addressed.

Bold and courageous, too, they were, as well as indomitable in spirit and mighty in perseverance, having an element of strength in their sinews with which more effeminate natures could not cope. While the eldest son of the family remained at home to till the ground, the younger ones usually followed the occupation of fishermen, a precarious calling on that rock-bound coast—hence the dangers to which they were exposed gave generally a grave earnestness to their strong and individual characters.

Then, their religious feelings were profound and powerful, making them forsake the parish church for the earnest and more spiritual preaching of the humble meeting-house; and in the stillness of the Sabbath evening, as group after group bent their steps across the Links from that rude edifice, they might invariably be heard discoursing with each other upon points of deep spiritual theology.

The superstitions of the olden time still lingered amongst them, filling their minds with simple wonder at, and a readiness to believe in, everything supernatural—from the hideous hob-

goblin to the graceful fairy that tripped in the dance at midnight by some mountain stream.

A strange combination of character this, where nothing shallow or superficial had room to exist. The grave and gay, the simple and profound, the strong faith in a wise and merciful God, yet a misapprehension of His real nature: nevertheless, all these united formed fine specimens of the true Scottish stamp now rarely seen. But as there are no virtues that have not their antagonistic vices, no pictures that have not two sides, one of shade as well as sunshine, we must also confess that these old portioners (as they were called) of Grey Craigs had the dark as well as the bright side in their natures.

If they themselves were honest, they showed too little mercy to those whose training or disposition rendered them liable to double dealing or deceit; if independent, there was a want of courtesy and softness in the expression of their best affections, and an illiberality often amounting to rudeness in their treatment of strangers; if brave, they were at times fierce, even cruel and unrelenting; and if religious, too intolerant of others, too strict, and often too fanatical.

I have spoken of the inhabitants, let us now take a glance at the town and neighbourhood of Grey Craigs.

Grey Craigs was principally a seaport town. It consisted of a line of red-roofed houses stretching along the coast, broken by sundry streets and narrow wynds climbing upwards from the shore. On a clear day these red-roofed houses, reflected on the ocean, made it look like some piece of finely-veined and polished jasper streaked with divers brilliant hues—red, blue, brown, in a setting of salt sea-green.

Forming naturally part of the scene was the quiet homelike harbour, where one or two sloops might always be seen lying moored beside the pier. A gleam of fire usually appearing from braziers on their decks, near which sailors idly lounged or smoked their pipes, regardless of the smells of tar and bilge water, suggestive of the harbour of a seaport town.

The coast-line was high and bold, sometimes descending precipitously to the yellow sands, at others sloping in green banks, broken by gullies, giving sheltered nooks and quiet spots,—the never-failing resort of the inhabitants of the town. In these the children played through long summer hours, gathering trails of blackened seaweed blown up among the prickly wild roses, or picking up coloured shells and perforated stones from amongst the sea-pink and rock saxifrage that flourished there; and there, too, in the gloaming, when the

day's work was over, might pairs of happy lovers be seen—too much engrossed with each other to care for a chance passer-by.

Across the Links were the dwellings of the weaver part of the population, crowned by the parish church and manse, while near it, in the valley, might be seen the humble, homelike meeting-house, where the poorer people of the community generally met for worship.

The smithy at Grey Craigs stood at the outskirts of the town. Even the bright sun of a July morning could not rob it of its dingy aspect, though it gleamed through its broken windows and lighted up its dull, dark interior. The smoke-begrimed strong couples bore quantities of old iron in the shape of broken rims of cart-wheels, worn-out plough-coulters, &c., while the unlathed walls were hung with chains, harrows, and numberless horse-shoes of different sizes.

The morning when my story begins—in the end of the eighteenth century—there glowed upon the forge a fire, which a boy in a sooty dress and a brown paper cap, blew into a strong red heat with the ponderous bellows, while a country lad stood by the anvil endeavouring, by means of a hammer, to beat a perverse piece of iron into a proper shape.

"I doubt if ye'll make a guid smith, Rob," said paper-cap with a grin, as he watched the young

ploughman's fruitless attempts to mould the refractory metal to his will.

"Never fear me, Davie," answered the youth; "I'll manage it yet," putting, as he spoke, more strength to his work, but without any better success, the perspiration in the meantime dropping from his face, which he wiped off with the sleeve of his fustian jacket.

"Deed, an' ye winna, Rob," persisted the boy, drawing forth a red-hot bar of iron, which made a fiery flash in the air and lighted up his bright countenance for a moment, adding, as with a great blow of his hammer he made the sparks fly, "See here, take you the bellows, an' I'll help you with your job."

"Weel, I think if I canna do it, it's no a brat like you that will," was the ungracious reception the boy's kind offer of assistance obtained from the sulky ploughman.

"It's no sae much strength o' arm as sleight o' hand that's needed," retorted Davie. "But I'm content to do my ain work, an' ye'll take my offer the next time I make it;" and so saying, he put back the bar of iron into the fire, and leaning upon the handle of the bellows, watched the inexperienced Rob working away vigorously to no purpose.

"I can see the harrows will be mended before Martinmas," added the boy, after a pause of some minutes.

"An' what's your business?" cried Rob, now waxing wroth, provoked by his own bad success in his work, and the contempt for his powers which he saw expressed in Davie's face, adding, "If ye take my advice, Davie Gordon, ye'll keep a civiler tongue in your head when ye speak to better folk than yoursel'."

"Better than yoursel'!" repeated the boy with a smile. Then feeling it to be a useless work to keep on good terms with the enraged ploughman, he added sarcastically, "Rob, were ye seeing Jenny last night? an' did she play her auld trick, an' put the dish-clout into yer pocket? Eh! but you were ill-off at Sandyknowe for ane when ye had to carry it sae far."

This allusion to some luckless adventure in Rob's courtship fairly roused the young man, and seizing an oak cudgel, he, with a volley of oaths, sent it spinning at his tormentor's head. But Davie was too quick for him, so quietly ducking behind an old barrel, as the weapon flew past without touching him, he exclaimed, "I see, Rob, you're as clever a marksman as ye are a smith: dinna aim sae high the next time."

What reply Rob would have made to this piece of advice we know not, for the conversation was here interrupted by the entrance to the smithy of a little girl, who exclaimed breathlessly,—

"Uncle, uncle, ye're to come to the house directly!"

"Yer uncle's no here, daughty!" exclaimed Davie, in the mischievous tones he had used to Rob; "but if ye want a nice bit o' smith's work done, there's yer man!" pointing to his neighbour, who by this time had ceased from his labour, and was looking quietly on.

"O Davie!" cried the girl, "tell me where my uncle is, if he's no at hand."

But all Davie's reply was a somersault on the floor.

"Rob, can ye no tell me," said the girl, for the first time appealing to the ploughman in her distress; and then fairly overcome she burst into a flood of tears; upon perceiving which, Davie stopped his fun, and asked kindly,—

"What ails ye, Tibbie, lassie? Hae ye broken your doll's arm, or lost the grand bonnet ye were trimmin' wi' gum flowers last night?"

"Oh no, no!" cried Tibbie, sobbing bitterly and hiding her face in her apron, "it's no that, it's my auntie that's ill, an' grannie sent me for my uncle. O Davie! I doubt auntie's awful bad."

"Ye stupid wee cat that ye are!" cried Davie with alarm, "what for did ye no tell me this at first, an' I wadna have put off as lang; yer uncle's no' at hand, he was sent for express awhile since to see

the laird's horse at Fairshiels that was ill, an' he thought when he was that length he might gang on to Arton for some things he needed frae the foundry. I'm sure I dinna ken what's to be done," he added thoughtfully. "I doubt I couldna reach him before he left Fairshiels, it's mair than twa hours since he gaed frae here; I can but try though, an' if Rob will look after the smithy in my absence, I'll run off, an' see if I can overtake him."

Rob, who had by this time fairly recovered his good temper, faithfully promised that no harm should happen to the place in Davie's absence; so the boy, throwing aside his shoes, waited not to wash the soot from his face, but sped off with the fleetness of a young roe in the direction of Fairshiels.

CHAPTER II.

" But when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours." —HOOD.

" We will be patient and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay ;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way." —LONGFELLOW.



THE Den of Grey Craigs through which
Davie now passed was the pride of the
neighbourhood.

It was a secluded spot—unseen until you entered it, being a ravine between the two hills which made a beautiful background to the town lying at their base. Wherever the eye wandered in this spot, it fell upon feathery banks tufted with ash and beech, and intermixed with many a hazel and thorn, and lighted here and there by the thread-like silver burn which wound its way from the mountain tarn, a little distant.

A soft wind was passing over the uplands, and

rippling the black water of the tarn, which he soon reached; it moved also the long grass in the valley, bearing with it the freshness of the dew scattered on the leaves of the wayside flowers, or the perfume of the yellow broom or purple thyme on the rugged braes where the rose linnet and the gold spink sang merrily.

Once or twice Davie seemed tempted to lift a stone and have a shy at some wild bird, or it might be the raven croaking overhead, and he felt it difficult to repress the wish to send the smooth stone skimming over the surface of the water; but if he slackened his speed for that purpose, the calm face of his master's wife rose up before him and lent him fresh vigour. He remembered, too, her unwearied patient kindness to himself, and very sorrowful he was for the unexpected illness in the absence of her husband.

Fairshiels was a few miles distant, and when Davie reached it, he found that the smith had left it some time before for the neighbouring town; and as it would be impossible to overtake him, there was nothing left for the boy but to retrace his steps in the homeward direction.

The cottage of William Martin, the smith of Grey Craigs, was a pleasant and picturesque one. It stood at a triangular corner out of the direct way of the street. Its little strip of garden in front was filled

with the aromatic thyme, balm, and June roses, while behind in its kail-yard, besides homely vegetables, was the "bonnie brier bush" with its white blossoms, and the old apple tree yielding in autumn a good crop of golden fruit; at its foot were two hives of bees, the delight of the smith's heart, who tended them carefully.

Everything within the house was kept clean and neat by the good housewife: in the best room, though the brown rafters were bare and there was only one stone-mullioned window, there was always an air of comfort. The boarded floor was white, and the chest of drawers, eight-day clock in good mahogany case, with the round table of the same wood, betokened the owners to be well-to-do in the world.

It was a lovely evening when William Martin, the smith of Grey Craigs, bent his steps through the Den, wearied with his day's travel. A soft twilight followed close upon a gorgeous sundown,—and up in the pale, clear sky, the crescent moon was floating dreamily with not a cloud to map its course, and nothing but the gentlest of summer breezes to send it gliding on its way.

In the west, however, golden and purple clouds were still crowded together and built up in glowing masses. The hum of life in the town was unheard amidst the solitude of the braes, where the wild-rose bushes were glistening with dewdrops.

As he drew near his cottage door, his mother, who had been watching for his coming, met him, and, laying her hand on his arm, said solemnly, "Stop a little, my son, afore ye gang in, and say, 'God's will be done.'"

"What do ye mean, mother?" he exclaimed hurriedly, as if scarce hearing her. "Speak to me, mother," he stammered wildly; for he saw by the look of trouble in her face there was something far wrong in his household. "Is it Mary? Is it the bairn? Oh mother, my heart misgies me; it's either the ane or the other that's ill."

"Oh, my son! my son!" sobbed the woman, now fairly breaking down. "How can I tell you, Willie; your bairn is weel, but your wife—Mary—is gane."

"Gane, Mary!" he repeated, as if in a dream. "Mother, say it's no true; I canna believe it;" and he grasped his mother's arm for support, repeating, "Gane! an' I hae nae feeling o't; my heart is like cauld iron or stane."

"Ye maun bow before the stroke of the Almighty, Willie," said his mother. But the poor man heard not the words, felt not the grasp laid upon his arm, as if the mother's heart bled for him, and would fain keep him from that sight which she knew would pierce his soul in his desolate home. He could only mutter wildly, "Gane!" as he unconsciously drew near his dwelling.

Mourners were in the house, but he saw them not ; and they stole quietly away, leaving the bereaved husband to his great sorrow. As the smith approached the bed on which lay the dead body of his wife, a parting ray from the setting sun, gleaming through the rose-covered casement, caused golden arrows to quiver and dance upon the sanded floor, and lighted up the wan, still face with an almost lifelike hue, while the breeze blowing through the opened window raised a stray lock of silken hair from the temples, and fluttered the muslin frill which encircled the head.

Awestruck he approached and lifted the hand crossed over the bosom, but it returned no answering pressure, and its icy chill struck like a palsy to his heart. He pressed his lips upon the death-cold brow, but the lid lay over the blue eye as still as if it were marble, and for the first time there was no gleam of welcome in it for him. No more again would she wake up to aught that was doing under the sun, for her warfare was ended, and he must now tread the rough paths of the world alone.

Long the bereaved one hung over the bed ; so long, and in such agony, that his mother feared for reason giving way. His mind wandered back to the sweet young days of their early courtship ; his first seeing her, a pretty, gentle girl whom he thought in his great humility far too good for him ; his first

present to her; his delight and proud exultation when his affection was returned; how she had softened him—the uncultivated, raw lad—led him to see things differently in this world, and, above all, led him to a Saviour. He recalled her daily round of duties, the foot that always hastened to meet him, the eye that ever shone bright at his coming—and the agony to feel that never again would these things be. And then he thought if she could have left him one message, one last word, but no; that luxury was denied him, for a sudden affection of the heart had silently and swiftly cut the thread of life, and he could scarcely realise that she who that morning he had left in health, sharing with him the toils of life, was now beyond the reach of trouble and toil.

How long Martin might have sat speechless beside the corpse of his wife, his mother knew not; but she at last resolved to try him with a sight of his child, and so, drawing near without a word, she placed the little infant on his knee. It was well judged, for the sight of its helplessness touched a chord in the father's heart, which found vent in a flood of tears, and clasping it to his breast, the strong man wept over it in silence.

The funeral was over, the last spadeful of earth had been thrown on the coffin, and the friendly ones that had helped to lay her in her grave had

been scattered, to take up other work in the world. William Martin returned to his home feeling like Naomi when she returned in her bereavement to the land of Judah, and with her words, too, in his heart, "Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt *bitterly* with me."

"Willie," said his mother that same evening, as she saw, on her return from milking the cow, her son sitting leaning his head on his hand in deep sorrow, "Willie, I maun leave you the morn, I canna be langer spared frae hame."

"Aweel, mother," answered the smith without raising his head, "ye've been kind to me, and you were aye kind to her that's gane, sae I canna complean."

"Aye, she's won hame at last, Willie, the Lord has ta'en her to Himself! but about you, I will come every wee while an' look after ye, an' Tibbie will do very well in my absence, she's a thoughtfu' lassie to be sae young. Effie I will take wi' me till she can run about hersel."

"Take Effie away! take my wee lassie!" cried the smith, "na, na, mother, I canna part wi' my bairn; it's a' I hae left me now o' my deid; God help me, if ye took my bairn, ye would leave me desolate."

"But what can ye do wi' a wee thing hardly six months auld?" asked his mother. "Tibbie is o'er

young for such a charge, an' unless ye get a steady elderly woman to keep your house an' take care o' her, ye must just let me get her away wi' me."

"I'll keep her myself, mother," replied her son. "I'll have a bit place for her in the smithy, out o' harms way, an' then I'll be able to see after her myself; ye ken," added the poor man sadly, "Mary aye said I was handy at keeping her, liker a woman for that work than a man."

"The thing's out o' a' sense and reason," replied his mother, aghast at the proposal, "I daresay such a scheme was never afore thought of by a man in his right mind; bring up an infant in a dirty, sooty place like a smiddy, among wild horses and wilder men! Never speak about such a thing, Willie."

"Deed, but mother," said the smith, "the mair I think o't, the mair feasible it looks; I'll keep her crib in yon corner that's now filled wi' rubbish, an' either Davie or me can be looking after her when Tibbie is busy in the house."

"Your father used to take nonsensical notions into his head," sighed the poor woman, helpless before her son's determination, and yet strongly opposed to the plan; but she knew by experience how vain it was to argue further in the matter.

As is often the case with these quiet natures, there was in the smith a resoluteness of purpose which, when once formed, could not be shaken. And yet it

is that very resoluteness of purpose which has made the Scottish nation what it is; and her favourite bard has said of it,—

“Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk of *carle-hemp* in man.”

However, as every virtue has its bad as well as its good side, this virtue needs to be married to wisdom and prudence, otherwise the results are evil.

Mrs. Martin, at this time finding her son so determined, could only reply—

“Aweel, Willie, ye’ll soon enough tire o’ the work, though ye’ll take your ain way the now, an’ much that laddie Davie will help you, he seems fit for naething but workin’ mischief; it’s a pity Uncle John winna let him gang to the sea, for it’s little comfort he’ll ever get wi’ him.”

“Mother,” said the smith, “ye a’ wrang Davie; I think I should ken him by this time, an’ so did Mary, an’ mony a time she said there wasna a kinder heart than Davie’s in a’ the toun; but he’s only a bairn yet, an’ I have heard ye often say, ‘we needna try to put an auld head on young shoulders.’”

“An’ so,” queried the mother, “will ye let me gang away the morn, Willie, without Effie? Oh! I

wish ye would yield this point, an' let me take her for some months."

"Na, na, mother, it canna be," said the man; and then he added, his voice trembling with emotion, "I couldna look her in the face when we meet in heaven if I neglected her bairn."

CHAPTER III.

" These struggling tides of life that seem,
In wayward aimless course to wend,
Are eddies of the mighty stream
That rolls to its appointed end."

—W. C. BRYANT.



HERE is a time in the morning which unites the softness of noon with the brilliancy of dawn. It is then the sportsman steps forth with his bag and gun, refreshed from his night's rest, brushing, as he passes along, the dewdrops that hang from every blade of grass or clover flower. The labourer, too, bearing his mattock and spade, leaves his woodbine covered cottage, from the chimney of which ascends the aromatic fragrance of the turf fire that has made his early breakfast.

The sun had just appeared over the hills behind Grey Craigs, and was bathing the uplands in light, while the grey mist still lingered in the valleys, and the beeches cast their long shadows on the dewy grass. The sea all around lay like an unbroken mirror, but near the shore it came rippling up with gentle breaks, only to crowd back again, wave upon

wave. The air was so clear that a sail might be seen coming steadily along as from out of another world, for one scarcely knew where the sky ended and the ocean began.

A few of the inhabitants of the town were astir : at one door might have been seen an old Kilmarnock nightcap, below which streamed out a few grey hairs as a setting to the weather-beaten face, while a bustling housewife appeared at another dressed in white mutch and short-gown, and scattered food to a hen which for some time past had been "cluck, clucking" to her brood.

Some fishermen had just returned from their night's labours, and were hauling up their boat upon the beach, their voices sounding clear and shrill in the quietness of the morning.

William Martin and his apprentice Davie Gordon were already at work. The bright fire, showing through the large window of the smithy, threw a strange red light upon the smith who, in his leathern apron, was making sparks fly all around, as he plied the sledge-hammer upon the heated iron on the anvil. Martin, though a strong man in the vigour of life, felt the work in which he was engaged to be no child's play, for the muscles of his brawny arms stood out like cords, and great drops of sweat bedewed his forehead.

Davie stood beside him, attending to the tempering

of the metal, plunging it when required into the wooden trough filled with water near by.

The smith was one of these thick-set figures which implies great strength, and one could see he was cool and sagacious from his broad open forehead, over which waved a few dark locks slightly tinged with grey. The low-set eyebrows were enlivened by a fine dark eye, but the symmetry of the face was spoiled by the large cheek-bones which bespeak the national peculiarity.

It was only a few days since that great grief came upon him, yet Martin must work, toil for his daily bread. He cannot like the rich man sit down and mourn, and in the dark chamber from which every ray of sunlight is excluded, indulge a selfish sorrow; no, he must be up and doing, though what made life sweet, worth living for, worth toiling for, has passed away. He will not talk much, either, will not breathe his grief into any mortal ear. Ah! but he tells it to his Heavenly Father, who hears and helps him to bear his sorrow. He seldom mentions the name which is never absent from his thoughts. People with natures such as his speak little, but they think much; you can read it in the eye; grief sinks into them with a kind of dull pain. You know the wound in his heart is too deep ever to be quite healed, but you know also that no duty will be omitted, and that his outer existence will flow on

calmly as before, and so in six months it will be the same, aye, and in the same number of years. Even as the smith works, the sad consciousness of his loss presses on him, but with something of a Spartan spirit in his Scottish nature, though this is blended with the hope and resignation of the Christian, his unspoken grief nerves him better for the battle of life, and the hope lying buried in the dead bosom of his wife makes him more long-suffering and patient with sin and suffering around.

Davie Gordon, the smith's young apprentice, was a tall athletic boy, with a face which could not be called handsome, for the features were irregular, but the eye was particularly bright, and the firmly-set mouth gave one the impression that his was a character resolved to fight not only manfully, but shrewdly, his way in the world.

People marvelled greatly why it was that a grave silent man like Martin loved the strange wild lad, for whose pranks and mischief he had constantly to make excuses and apologies. Probably it arose from that rule in our natures which often makes us find sympathy with those that are contrary to ourselves, and causes us to value those qualities in others that we ourselves do not possess. Or it may be from a feeling of chivalry which compels the strong to defend the weak, and see good points in a character where every other one sees only bad ones.

Be the cause what it might, there is no doubt Martin looked with a lenient eye on the boy, and bore with him, though sometimes sorely tried. Indeed, though he knew his faults, he welcomed him heartily to the smithy, when Davie showed his leanings in that way, since his sole relative Mr. Gordon of the Glen, who had brought him up, made decided objections to his choosing a seafaring life.

The odds and ends of old harness and broken plough coulter have been removed from the corner of the smithy, which Martin had selected as a place for Effie to be kept from harm; at the same time an osier crib had been introduced, in which the infant slept as soundly in spite of the noise of hammering as she did when she lay in her mother's breast, and was rocked to slumber by the sweet low lullaby with which she was wont to soothe her to rest.

The charge Davie Gordon had taken of the infant had made him quite a different boy; this love rendering him more considerate, and giving something of importance to his air and gait; and when, after the lapse of an hour, Rob his old friend entered the smithy to get some harness mended, the boy left his work for a minute to draw aside the curtain and let the ploughman look on the sleeping child. Quietly he lifted a corner of the blanket, and peeped into the face of the infant lying with one soft, warm

cheek turned upwards, the other resting on the pillow, while a tiny chubby hand lay over the coverlet. Yes, as quietly he peeped into the crib of the infant as a few months ago he looked into the nests in the Den, to count the pretty blue eggs they contained.

"Man, if ye could only see her wee een," said Davie with enthusiasm, "they sparkle like bonnie beads; but she's sleepin' yet, an' we mauna waken her," and then he added with delight, "she kens me, an' stretches out her wee plump arms for me to take her. Eh! but she's an awfu' nice wee thing!"

"An can ye feed her?" asked his friend, with something of awe in his voice, looking intently the while at the tiny infant as if it were some curious piece of mechanism which he could not understand.

"Can I no!" was the prompt reply, "you should see me some day; but I must put down the curtain the now, for I dinna want her to waken just yet, as Tibbie will no be ready to take her." And so saying, the two youths withdrew from the place, leaving the child in its unconscious slumber.

Days passed on, and Effie grew from the infant to the toddling child, watched over and cared for by Martin and his apprentice, with the assistance of Tibbie, now grown to be a tall, strong girl. Old Mrs. Martin visited them frequently to tidy up things and put the clothes in repair; and when she

saw how well the child was cared for, she had to confess that, after all, her son had not acted in the matter so foolishly. Davie, also, she had to own, was "no sic an ill laddie, an' he might turn out weel," adding the old proverb, "It's no the noisiest cart that gangs quickest o'er the brae."

CHAPTER IV.

" The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst their tall ancestral trees
O'er all the pleasant land.
The deer across the greensward bound,
Through shade and sunny gleam ;
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream."

—F. HEMANS.



ON the other side of the Den stood Briary Park, an old rambling building built in feudal times, and added to at different periods according to the taste or humour of the proprietor.

Over the ancient doorway frowned the arms of the family carved in freestone, while two massive round towers projecting from the extreme angles of the house gave it something of a castellated appearance. Behind rose a ledge of rocks, on the top of which grew cedars dark as midnight, and pines with needle-like leaves, making shadows into which the sun streamed and lighted up patches of the

yellow and brown moss at their feet. Over the rocks hung many a long wreath of curious creeping plants, while here and there a stray bush forced its roots into a crevice, where one would have thought it could scarcely find nourishment, yet it not only lived, but flourished there in beauty; and all this was varied by clumps of thyme and sprigs of the gentle-looking rock-rose, growing amidst beds of moss which covered the grey stones with a carpet rivalling in beauty the richest tapestry.

To the front was a lawn of deepest green, through the midst of which wound a carriage drive, shaded by an avenue of oaks, the oaks and old building corresponding well together, both having something in common of substantial grandeur. No gaudy flowers broke upon the uniformity of the scene; no gay-looking patches of blue and yellow, inspiring discontent with a feeling of displaced colour amidst an unpretending green. All was in harmony around Briary Park, and one could not approach it without feeling that surely some old Scottish family, proud of its long line of ancestry, resided there. The interior of the building agreed with the outward aspect. It was full of spiral staircases, covered with quaint carving; long galleries, with rooms branching off of various sizes; from the large old hall, hung round with family portraits of mailed warriors and richly-robed dames, to the small pigeon-hole apartments of the round towers.

The oak-panelled library, which opened from the public hall, was a large handsome room, but lighted dimly by small windows.

It was a cold day in spring ; a fire burned brightly on the wide hearth at one end, while the other was filled by a heavily-carved bookcase. A table of dark oak occupied the middle of the floor ; a thin-legged spinnet and some chairs with leather backs formed the other articles of furniture in the room. The rays of the sun, streaming in through the many-paned sashes, printed diagonal impressions upon the slippery waxed boards (for the floor was only partially carpeted), and lighted up the brown hair of a boy who sat by the table whistling a tune, while he prepared some fishing tackle. His rod and basket were lying beside him, as if he were just about to start for a day's sport.

The boy's complexion was fair, though not effeminately so, while his high forehead, with rings of brown hair clustering around it, harmonised well with the classical outline of face and head.

The short upper lip, and finely-chiselled nostril, told of pride and high birth ; and his keen dark eye, though softened with its long lash, testified to a haughty, if not an overbearing, temper.

" Arthur, will you come with me to Grey Craigs ? " asked Mrs. Harvey, his grandmama, as she entered the room equipped for a walk ; and

then seeing how he was engaged, she said, "You can fish in the stream on our return home, for I see you are making preparations for that purpose."

"Willingly, I'll go there, grandmama," answered the boy, "only, pray don't expect me to sympathise with all the people who have 'sair hosts,' or are ill 'wi' the pains.' What a tiresome set of old croakers you look after, grandmama," added the boy mischievously.

"You will not be called upon to suffer in that way to-day," said his grandmama, "as I am not going to visit any sick person ;" adding, "but I do wish, Arthur, I could see you more considerate of those who are less fortunate in life than yourself. Remember, my boy, true greatness consists in thinking little of one's-self, and much of others."

"Dear grandmama," answered Arthur, rising and slinging his basket over his shoulder, "you know what old James says when you tell him I am thoughtless and inconsiderate, 'The laddie is young yet, he'll get sense as he grows aulder; just wait a wee and ye'll see him wise and staid enough.'"

"I most heartily trust it may be so; and I am sure both James and you will allow there is room for improvement," answered Mrs. Harvey, smiling.

"Now, then, I'm ready!" exclaimed the boy, as he took his bonnet from the peg in the lobby; adding

laughingly, "and who is the leddy to honour with our presence to-day?"

"Do you remember your old friend the smith?" responded Mrs. Harvey with an answering smile.

"Why, yes," he replied, "I think I'm bound to keep a spot in my memory fresh for him;—he frightened me horribly when I was a child, humbug that he was!"

"He only obeyed my orders which were given in kindness to you," said his grandmama, "for I think I know to what you refer. I could not keep you from the sand-pits behind his house, where you loved so much to play, though you had been told so often of the danger you were in; and I knew that some little boys had been smothered to death in them."

"Well, he had no right to threaten to take me into the smithy and chop off my head," retorted the boy proudly. "Indeed, he ought not to have spoken to me as if I had been a poor child in the town. Papa would have been very angry if he had heard him."

"Your papa is too sensible a man not to be very thankful to any one who saved his wilful son from danger, when that son would not obey his grandmama," answered Mrs. Harvey. Then she added, laughing: "But do you remember when I caught you a few days after making for the door dressed in your papa's coat, with the tails sweeping the ground,

holding on your head with one hand an old hat you had sought out of the lumber-room, but which, in spite of all you could do, would tumble over your nose, and in the other you carried a toy gun? When I asked you where you were going dressed up in that extraordinary style, you answered quite gravely, 'to shoot the smith, because you *was* a man now, and *wol* papa's clothes.'

"What a precious little donkey I had been in these days," answered Arthur, laughing heartily in his turn, adding, "but are we going to visit the smith just now, grandmama?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Harvey, "for I wish to see his little girl; her mother was the best servant we ever had. She was your mamma's maid before her marriage. I heard of her death when we were abroad, and since our return one thing after another has happened to prevent me going to the town to see her."

"All right, then," exclaimed the boy merrily, "and in the meantime Snap and I shall have a rabbit hunt as we go along. Snap, here, old fellow, do you wish a race?"

Snap, a little terrier who had been lying asleep in the hall, came bounding at his master's call, and began dancing hysterically round his legs, rushing a little bit forwards and then back again in a most undignified manner—but terriers are

not in general given to the study of composure in deportment.

It was a lovely day when Mrs. Harvey and Arthur bent their steps across the wood-path on their way to Grey Craigs. Some of the early trees were draped with tender green, while others, bare and brown, still showed their massive trunks and strong arms unadorned by leaflet or bud. The sky was blue, save where some thin gauzy clouds floated over it, and the air, which came from the sea, was pure and invigorating.

Thrushes and blackbirds scattered around notes of harmony, accompanied by a chorus of sparrows, red-breasts, and other smaller birds, which kept up a continual chattering in the bursting hedgerows.

The boy was little company to Mrs. Harvey during the walk, for at one time he was following the dog which had scented out a rabbit, or at another was sending it after a stone he threw before it in the path, but she was happy in his enjoyment and amused by his gambols, and very proud she was of him as the wind tossed up his brown curls from his forehead, and his eye sparkled with good-humour. "Dear Arthur, I hope he may grow up to be a credit to his home," she half-muttered aloud.

Mrs. Harvey had come to reside at Briary Park during the absence of her son and daughter-in-law in India. Arthur, their eldest son, had been left in

her charge, and spent his holidays with her there, though his home at other times was in a large English boarding school.

The old mansion house had been scarcely inhabited save by servants for some years past; for when Captain Harvey and his wife had been at home, they did not care to reside in Scotland; but now Mrs. Harvey had returned to it, and everything was fast falling into the usual routine much the same as when she lived there, a happy wife and mother.

Again the butler went to and fro to the town for newspapers and books; or the smart lady's maid made purchases in the shops, giving herself far more airs than did her mistress; while the lumbering family coach again might be seen moving along conveying Mrs. Harvey to the houses of the neighbouring gentry, or driving her every Sabbath to the parish church, where the old footman, with his powdered wig and bright blue livery, preceded the mistress up the aisle to the pew in the corner which bore the Harvey Arms, placed the massive Bible on the board, after flinging open the door for her to enter, and took his accustomed seat at her back to nod through the sermon.

When Mrs. Harvey and Arthur reached Martin's cottage and inquired for the child, they were directed to the smithy by Tibbie who still presided over the smith's small household.

They went there accordingly, and found Martin, with his brawny arms bare to the elbows, busy shoeing a horse, while Davie was working a little apart, and Effie, with her frock pinned round her waist, was imitating his every moment with a tiny hammer which she held in her chubby hands.

The place was much the same as when we saw it last, only that the crib had been removed, and around it were strewed Effie's various playthings—some shells, a few withered gowans half formed into a wreath, a broken doll, and a little shoe filled with pretty white stones.

"That's the way, Effie," exclaimed Davie, as he saw with pleasure the child's attempts to imitate him in his work, adding, "Eh! but yere a clever wee lassie."

Effie's dark eyes sparkled with delight as she repeated, "'Ats a way, 'ats a way," being the only part of the boy's speech that her ear had caught, or that she had been able to retain.

"Where will I take Effie to-night after our work's done?" asked the lad, smiling on the little figure beside him.

Again the dark eyes sparkled, as she repeated in childish tones, "Effie gan gazie buckies wi' Davie," pointing at the same time to the sea; then looking demure and important, she began to labour as before, every now and then glancing up to watch the boy, and imitate his proceedings.

Upon the sight of Mrs. Harvey at the door, the smith paused in his work, and calling to Davie to finish it, courteously addressed the lady, and invited her to come to his house and rest awhile.

"If you can spare me your company for a few minutes," answered the visitor, "I will not detain you long. I know this is an unseasonable hour to call, but I was anxious to hear all the particulars from you of your wife's death; you know," she added, "she was a great favourite in our family." Then perceiving Effie, who had begun to toddle round the smithy after Snap, she asked kindly, "Is this Mary's child?"

"She is, ma'am," was the reply of the smith, "though I dinna think she resembles her mother ava. Mary's een were blue, an' hers are dark. She's no like her in the temper either, being a bauld wee thing, no easily feared, an' aye wanting her ain way; now, her mother was so quiet an' canny. I'm whiles vexed to see how little she takes after her."

"She seems a fine child, nevertheless," said Mrs. Harvey, as she stroked down her silky brown hair. But Effie, now in her father's arms, had eyes for nothing but Snap, which she watched intently, as he made himself at home by snuffing into every corner of the smithy, and as she watched him, she clapped her fat little hands together and

screamed with delight. The smith, with Effie in his arms, then led the way to the cottage, while Arthur lingered in the smithy to make acquaintance with Davie, and be initiated into some of the mysteries of the craft.

Mrs. Harvey, on entering Martin's house, was invited to take a seat in the little parlour, or *ben* end of the house, and her host stood respectfully by her side. He then, in few words, gave an account of the sudden death of his wife during his absence, adding,

"She wasna even permitted to leave me a last word; it would hae been a comfort, but the Lord kent best." He then said, "Oh! but, ma'am, we didna need a dying testimony; she had lived a Christian life since ever I knew her."

"She was certainly a good girl when with us," said Mrs. Harvey; and then she asked if Effie was her only child.

"The only one living," replied her father. "There were other three, but they are laid beside their mother in the kirkyard: it was a sair trial to my wife an' me the loss o' our bits o' bairns; but oh, Mrs. Harvey, a' that affliction only ripened her the faster for heaven; an' then, as she wasna strong hersel', she lived every day preparing for her last ane. She wouldna gang to her bed at night without putting the house tidy, and when I would say,

'Yer tired, Mary; let that alane till the morning,' she would say, 'Willie, I maun be a' ready when the Lord comes, whether it be at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;' for ye see," he added, "she kent she had a disease that would cut her off suddenly."

"And was she dull, then, and dispirited?" asked Mrs. Harvey, "for the constant thinking of death was bad for one in her state."

"Deed an' she was aye the cheeriest and brightest o' ony body I ever saw. 'No, no;,' she would say whiles, 'death will no come ony the sooner that we are prepared for it, and "having set my house in order" makes me wonderfully content and resigned to God's will.' It's a great trial to me the loss of my wife," said Martin, after a minute's pause, "but the Lord will do what is right for us, so we can only reverently bow our heads and say, 'It is well, His will be done!' Ah! Mrs. Harvey, *there's a need-be for a' this.*"

"Is the smithy a proper place for a child to be playing in?" asked Mrs. Harvey, when Martin had ceased speaking, "is there no danger of her learning rough ways?"

"I never let rough words be used, if I can help it, an' she is clever enough, she kens to keep out o' harm's way. I thought, ma'am, seeing I couldna get my mother to stay wi' me, that the bairn was

better under my ain een, than left to a bit lassie like her cousin Tibbie."

"Poor Mary!" sighed Mrs. Harvey, "if she had only been spared to her child, and such a fine little thing she is, many a one would be proud of her." And her thoughts went out to her childless daughter, married to the rich man, whose life was embittered for want of an heir to succeed to their large estates.

"I mony time think," said Martin, "that a bairn like her, mair than the maist, would hae needed a mother's care, but the Lord thought different; an' ye see, ma'am, *there maun aye be a something!*"

After some further talk with the smith, Mrs. Harvey walked home alone, for Arthur had remained in the smithy with Davie, the two lads having in the short time become great friends. The young never bother themselves about distinctions of rank or studying propriety like older people. Davie was proud to make the acquaintance of Arthur, who he felt knew so much that he had never even heard of before, and Arthur admired the brave and undaunted spirit which he soon recognised in the smith's apprentice.

As Mrs. Harvey walked home she kept repeating, "Aye a something!" for these words in particular of the smith's conversation kept sounding in her ears, and she thought of them as she took her way by the seashore and looked upon the white crested waves

tinged by the setting sunlight. Then from the ocean with its mighty wonders, her mind went up to Him who held the waters in the hollow of His hand, though of that great God as a reconciled Father in Jesus Christ she had but a dim apprehension.

"Aye a something!" she said again, as she bent her knees that night in prayer, realising, more than she had ever done before, God as a hearer and answerer of the cries of His people; she also felt more keenly that life here is much of a craving—a want—a something which we think we would need to make us happy; still she could not, like the smith, say that there was a "need be" for such wants, and then she wondered as one word after another of the conversation returned to her mind, if Martin, and people such as he, had not some secret consolation, denied to her. Again there rose up before her the vision of her daughter and the broad acres that must pass away from the noble house that had owned them for generations; over and over she repeated them, and as she pondered, a ray of light began to break through the crust of formality in her mind. That conversation had been better to her than many sermons, and the plaintive but true words so often on the lips and in the hearts of the Scottish poor had opened her eyes in some measure to see God's greatness and man's impotence, God's wisdom and

man's folly; and she bowed her head, trying to feel that there surely must *be a need for something* to cross our heart's hopes as long as we sojourn here.

Well was it for Mrs. Harvey that from that time she read the Word of God with an earnest, teachable spirit, though on Sundays she still attended the parish church, nor would she once have dreamt of seeking the old meeting house with its more evangelical teaching.

There was a wide line of demarcation drawn in these days between Churchmen and Dissenters, which was all the more sad that, in general, evangelical religion in the Church established in the land was at a discount; over a great part of the country a cold, half-infidel moderatism reigned; error was rampant in the high places, while truth only made itself heard in weak and half-muffled accents, which presented but a feeble front to the triumphant tide of indifference sweeping all before it. There was a good deal of nominal orthodoxy, but little strong, fervent, or high-toned piety. Of course, here and there in the Church were a few noble exceptions of men, with holy zeal, who were burning and shining lights amidst the surrounding darkness, but these were the exceptions—rare exceptions—therefore the more spiritual among the people sought food to their taste amongst the Dissenters, where the lamp

in the sanctuary still burned, and the shekinah had its abode in the holy place.

The smith and his friends, on the other hand, frequented the meeting house where the aroma of freshly-gathered flowers ascended with the incense of prayer and praise. There was nothing common or disagreeable in this aroma; doubtless to the long-accustomed nostrils it was the atmosphere of the Sabbath-day, and, it might be, helped even the devotions of those simple unlettered people—a people whose only lore was the learning of the Bible, and who loved above all things a faithful, rousing discourse.

CHAPTER V.

“ He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.”

—SHAKESPEARE.



T was spring when Mrs. Harvey visited the smith at Grey Craigs; and now it has passed away with its lengthening days and opening flowers, and its nests in the Den full of blue eggs which afterwards burst into small song birds. Summer, too, has passed very noiselessly, its footsteps scarcely heard as they glided on, leaving no print behind; every morning rising purple in the east, and every evening sinking golden into the west, casting long dewy shadows upon the grass. Long ago the blossoms have disappeared from the orchard trees; long ago the white lily has faded on its stem, it was part of summer, and it could not survive its loss. And now autumn has come, and is fleeting fast away—autumn, when the shadows of morn and eve almost mingle together and tint the declining year with something akin to gloom. Then the deep verdure of the hedgerows and the massive foliage of

the trees contrast vividly with corn-fields either bending their golden load under the hook of the reaper, or partly studded with regular piles of heavy sheaves. The clear air too is rife with bees and butterflies, and filled with pleasant sounds, mirthful voices softened by distance, and robins twittering among ripening hazel nuts.

At the farmhouse of Glen the bustle of the day was past; and the labourers having finished their work had left for their various homes, while Mysie, the faithful housekeeper, was busy preparing the simple supper of *sowens* for her master. John Gordon, or as he was commonly called Uncle John, sat by his door in that calm evening and read the last week's paper, which only the day before reached the town, and only a few minutes ago had arrived at the Glen. The paper and print were neither of them of the best description, and Uncle John's eyes were not so good as they once had been, but by the help of the horn spectacles astride on his nose he could read as well as ever he did. Overhanging the seat on which he sat was a rose-bush even yet boasting a few flowers, though the slight frosts at night had somewhat blighted their bloom; while in the small slip of a garden at his side were some plants—thyme, balm, and apple-ringie (southernwood), sending forth a fragrant smell in the dewy evening. The burn which flowed past the other side of the knoll,



"Uncle John sat by his door in that calm evening, and read the last week's paper."—Page 44.

tinkled towards the sea, and as it rounded the corner of the meadow appeared like a bow of silver; but so busy was Mr. Gordon with the newspaper that he neither heard nor saw aught of these things.

Gordon of the Glen was a middle-sized man with a peculiarly shrewd, though not unpleasant face; a keen blue eye, seen when he took off his glasses, and wiped them upon his coloured Indian handkerchief lying on his knee; hair plentifully mixed with white; and a high forehead furrowed with lines of thought and sagacity. Everything about him was neatness and accuracy, from the shining silver shoe buckles to the well-brushed hair parted over his temples. You could never find a spot upon his linen, or a speck of dust upon his coat; indeed, you could see that he was sensitive to a nicety to anything out of order about his person.

Now, how Uncle John came to be possessed of this title binding him in relationship to the whole human family we know not, but certain it was that to rich and poor, young and old alike, he bore that friendly name, yet he had neither nephew nor niece to lay the foundation of it; indeed he had no near relations in the world saving our friend Davie, the smith's apprentice, and Davie was only a cousin's child.

The Glen where Gordon lived was a low-built unpretending farmhouse, so near the town as to

make it cheerful, and yet so far apart as not to be disturbed by its noise and bustle. It had its barn and outhouses, and its stack-yard close by, while near it stood the long trough hewn from the tree trunk, and holding clear cool water that flowed into it incessantly from a spring in the hillside, and to this trough the tired cattle came at close of day and drank their fill. Then there was the dairy, Mysie's special care, always redolent with the fragrance of the golden pats of butter ranged on the shelf, and the basins of delicious milk standing upon the well-scoured floor.

Uncle John's farm was not large, but it was his own, and had been his father's, and his father's father's for generations, and the man loved it as a son. It lay beside Briary Park, and would have increased the value of that property; but not all the gold of the Indies would have made Gordon part with it. He was prouder of it than many a one is of his thousands of acres, and would not have exchanged it for a princely domain. Here he had lived boy and man, and here he hoped to die, and though it would be Davie's at his death, till then, he said, the laddie "*maun fend*" for himsel."

Gordon was a bachelor, and bragged of his freedom and independence, pitying greatly the married of his sex for their "bondage," as he termed it; but there were some so cruel as to hint that even he would

have had as much freedom in the married state, for Mysie, it was alleged, was more than a match for him, and generally carried her point by dint of perseverance and much speaking. However, Mysie was very sensible and shrewd, and was always using her power for her master's good; though she boasted at times—"It's baith out the house and in the house I hae to look after things; deed the maister in some ways is nae better than a bairn. Misca women! Weel, I wonder what he would do without a woman to see that a' things were keepit right; gie him his newspaper, or a crony to speak about politics tae, and everything wad be neglected,—it beats a', the conceit o' men!" So reasoned Mysie, and she was not slack to tell him so; and yet she would have defended her master and his property with her life.

But now Uncle John had dropped the paper and leant back upon his seat looking thoughtful and sad, as if something he had read there had touched his heart; yet, no; he will lift it again and read, pooh, poohing, as he does. But he cannot help himself; he has been reading of storms and shipwrecks, and he must think of Davie who has left him—left Grey Craigs, and the smithy, and little Effie,—left everything for a sailor's life; he could not help it, the boy; he had struggled against that love of the sea for the sake of the kind friend who had taken him an orphan lad to his home and heart; for the sake of

the faithful Mysie who had borne with his pranks and follies, and loved him in spite of them all; for the sake of little Effie, whose dimpled arm had been wound round his neck;—but the sea, that great, wide-spreading ocean whose waters laved the shores of other lands, oh! it had been his dream from childhood, and he longed and panted for it as the chained eagle longs to burst its bonds and fly.

“ His home had been on the stormy shore
Of Albion's mountain land ;
His ear was tuned to the breakers' roar,
And he loved the bleak sea sand ;
And the torrent's din and the howling breeze
Had all his soul's wild sympathies.

But they told him tales of other lands
That rose over Indian seas,
Where rivers wandered o'er golden sands
And strange fruit bent the trees ;
And they lured him away from his childhood's hearth,
With its voice of song and its light of mirth.”

And so he has gone, and his joyous laugh and his bounding step are heard no more sounding through the small house of the Glen, and its master and Mysie miss him greatly.

Far away upon the Atlantic rides now the ship—Davie's home—her sails bravely set, fairly off upon her voyage with the breeze in her favour, leaving the fogs that were gathering behind her on the shore she had left; and Davie stood on her

deck looking on the restless unmeasured sea with a strange yearning in his heart for his friends at Grey Craigs; but at the same time with a resolution to go on, and find his own place among the restless activities of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

" Ah ! well for us all, some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes ;
And in the hereafter angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away."

—J. G. WHITTIER.



AS Gordon sat by the door, sometimes reading, sometimes thinking, the latch of the little white gate was lifted, and the smith, dressed in his Sunday coat, approached him with the salutation—

"Gude e'en to you, Glen (the name by which Uncle John was known in the neighbourhood), how's a' wi' ye the night?"

"I canna complane," was the answer, "how are ye yoursel?"

"No so bad," replied the smith, taking a seat on the bench beside his friend.

"Hae ye heard ony thing o' Davie since he left?" asked his visitor.

"Naething, naething," replied Uncle John sadly, "I expected to hae gotten word or this time. Oh! he's a sair miss to us here; but ye see we

couldna keep him frae that weary sea. I believe he drank in his love for it wi' his mother's milk,—she was a fisherman's wife,—puir Alie ; it's ill gane against the inclination, smith ; ye may mak it bend for a while, but sooner or later it will gang back like a bow to its auld bent. I canna blame him either, for I hae little but the land to leave him, so he must look after himsel in the world. How are ye doing, though, without him ?”

“Better than I expected,” was the answer ; “Tam is doing well enough, but somehow Davie had a sair grip o' my heart ; an' Effie takes mony a greet about him.”

Mysie, who had been passing at the time and overheard the conversation, here said, “Tuts, dinna ye baith sit an' vex yoursels about the laddie, he'll come hame a braw man some day, an' marry your wee Effie, smith.”

“Hear to her,” remarked her master with contempt, “a real woman's speech, no man would hae thought on the like ; women are aye thinkin' about marriage—either for themselves or other folk.”

“Weel, weel, thae things maun be,” answered Mysie tartly, “an' though I'm an auld maid mysel, I say where a marriage is a happy ane, it's the best thing—for it's what God intended for baith man and woman. Did He no say, ‘It was not good for man to be alone?’ and did He not make them at the

beginning male and female, to help and comfort ane another? so I say again if a marriage is a happy ane it's the best way."

"Aye, a happy ane! ye may weel put in an *if*, woman; show me a happy ane," said Gordon.

But Mysie had said her say, and muttering that she hadna time to stand palavering there, went again within doors, leaving her master to finish his tirade against matrimony to the smith.

"She's away," he said, adding, "we canna agree on that subject. Happy marriage, forsooth! There's Jenny Geddes that married Templeton the mason last year, she came to me a while since, begging me to speak to her man, as he was wasting a' their means; an' I, like a great simpleton that I was, tried to interfere, an' got naething frae him but impudence,—no that she was na grateful hersel, puir thing. An' then there's Meg Tod that lost her laddie: when I gaed an' tried to say a word to comfort her, and began enumerating her mercies, among them her husband, still spared to her, she answered, 'No doubt, Glen, for if I had lost him, I would hae lost his pension (he had been an auld soldier), which would hae been a heavy loss.' But they're a set o' hypocrites that wad tell you they would ever compare the loss o' a man to that o' a bairn."

"There's surely another side o' the story," answered the smith, smiling sadly, as visions of his own gentle

wife rose up before him, and the happiness he had enjoyed with her, which was as much as had ever fallen to the lot of any man on earth; but his friend would not be diverted off the theme, so he answered—

“I’m no so sure o’ that; an’ who can it weel be otherwise? Ye see, wi’ the women, it’s just wha will gie them the best down-sitting, or the finest claes, they canna think or care for ony thing else; an’ wi’ men it’s little better,—they want a wife wi’ siller, or somebody to keep their house; love, if ever there was such a thing, is out of the question now!” then adding, “Do ye mind o’ Nettleflat, smith?”

“Aye, that I do! he was a rough auld carle, though sterling honest; he aye got his horses shod at my smithy, an’ no easy pleased he was. What about him, though?”

“Do ye mind o’ his wife?” asked Gordon; “it’s lang since she died, but the way the twa quarrelled was sad; ye might hear o’t.”

“I might at the time,” answered the simple smith, “but I seldom take much heed to what is said. ’Deed, to tell you the truth, I never let gossip about folk be spoken among the young men that gather at the smiddy.”

“Weel, it’s like yesterday, when I was a bit laddie,” continued Gordon, “I met Nettleflat mounted on a cart-horse, dressed in his Sunday’s best. I

didna ken then where he was bound for, but I heard it after. He, honest man, thought he, like the Laird o' Cockpen, would be the better of a wife

' His braw house to keep ;
But favour wi' wooin' was fashious to seek ;'

so he meant to dispense wi't. He had a list written out (he was a very methodical man) of every lassie in the place he thought likely ; and he was determined he would hae one o' them before he returned. He gaed first to Windydoors, and the daughter there was asked to speak to him ; he was sitting on his horse at the door. Like the Laird o' Cockpen, too,

' What was his errand he soon let her know.'

But she, like Mrs. Jean, said ' Na ' ; an' I dinna even ken if she courtesied. Weel, no the least daunted, he turned his horse's head to the road again, saying, ' Gie hup, Rosie, if one winna, another will ' So he went on trying one after another, an' aye getting the same answer—for women like to be courted ; maybe the courtship's the best bit o' the thing. At last he came to a puir, snooled lassie that had a cross stepmother, an' she wasna allowed to say ' na.' An' a miserable life she had ; an' when she died, as they were a terrible ignorant, uncultivated kind o' folk, I stepped owre to see if I could help them a wee bit wi' the funeral letters. When I got in within the door,

I thought I would be choked wi' the smell o' turpentine; and on being shown into the parlour I could see nothing but smoke, an' the smell there fairly took my breath away; however, I gaed forward, an' there was Wylie himsel wi' a red hot poker in one hand an' a stick o' black sealing-wax in the other, sealing the funeral letters. He had a' the place bespattered wi' the wax, an' his face was like the poker for redness. I lifted the letters, an' to my astonishment he was sealing them with a seal that had on it as a motto, 'It's all in my eye an' Betty Martin, O.' I could not help laughing at the whole proceeding, though it was on such a solemn occasion. I made them light a candle and bring another seal, and soon put matters right. Wylie, after watching me, exclaimed, 'How handy ye are, Glen, I would rather shear a day in hair'st than take such a job up again if I could help it.'"

As the smith had little smypathy with Gordon's sentiments on marriage, he let the subject drop; wondering at the same time how it was that a sensible man like Gordon spoke as he did. It was only that these simple folks knew not the romance in that seemingly outward callous life—the one bright spot—what might have been, and was yet, through darkening shades of memory; they little guessed how often that man, defiant and caustic though he appeared, remembers a little hand that

stirred him once—oh! how strangely—feels its touch, though it was so gentle; sees an eye soft and dovelike, yet having the power to shake his manhood to the depths. Aye, and Gordon, how often in the deep midnight, when ye start from your sleep, it is because ye were dreaming of the waves leaping and dashing around that silent grave in the lone churchyard where all your hopes lie buried,—tush! he says, it was a meteor's light that he mistook for a star—a mirage instead of living waters where he might quench his thirst; he was deceived, forsaken, he will banish the past from his mind, he will never trust again; and he has grappled with the stern realities of life—this common prosaic life of ours, this dull, material existence, till everything like sentiment and romance has been driven out of it, and he thinks his neighbours poor fools to be thus enslaved. Well, well, laugh at it as ye will, ridicule, as ye will, love's mysterious power, and yet strong man as ye are, ye must yield before it when an old song, a flower, a lock of hair may recall the past, and ye have no strength to stay the overwhelming torrent. And thank God that thus it is, thank God for that dream as ye call it, that mysterious feeling,—it was sent to purify the affections, to ennoble them, to lift them out of the mire of dead selfishness which clings to our nature, to make the earth not a cold dead spot to our hearts. Yes, truly,

the heart's worship lifts the soul into a purer atmosphere, and of neither man nor woman can it be said, if they loved truly, that they loved in vain : and thus sings the poet—

“ Not through true love is any woman lost,
Whatever tales they tell,
Of faithful woman loving to her cost,
Say, ‘ she loved too well.’
Love on, true hearts, if ye can dare love’s pain,
And bear his yoke alone !
To love be sure is your eternal gain,
And shall for all atone.”

“ But what’s the news this week ? ” inquired the smith. “ Is there no hope o’ this weary war coming to an end ? ”

“ Weel, it’s looking something nearer a termination now,” replied his friend. “ ’Deed, the Radicals hae some justice on their side when they say that it was the king an’ his ministers that landed us in this ; it surely wasna a fair thing that America should be taxed for our extravagance. I wish wi’ a’ my heart we had peace, provisions are sae high, an’ our working folk are clamouring. I would like to see a change o’ ministers, an’ Lord North and his party out.”

“ But would we be ony better wi’ the other party ? ” asked the cautious smith.

“ We couldna weel be ony worse,” was the reply. “ An’ there’s France,” he continued, “ the king an’ nobles are driving the puir folks desperate wi’ their

usage o' them; and the queen gies hersel up to a' kinds o' extravagances. It strikes me there will be an awful reckoning some day."

"Are ye no coming in to your supper the night?" now interposed Mysie, speaking from the window near where the two friends were seated. "The sowans will be clean cauld, an' there's frost in the air, so ye had better be in the house, maister; ye'll be groanin' wi' the pains the morn."

"Tuts, woman, ye are aye dreadin' the day ye never saw," was the retort; "there's nae frost in the air, it might be midsummer for heat."

"Aweel, Glen," said Mysie, "ye maun hae yer ain way, an' the last word into the bargain, sae ye can please yoursel, but ye dinna like your sowans cauld ony mair than other folk."

Thus admonished, the farmer rose and led the way into the cosy parlour, where a blazing fire cracked and sparkled on the hearth, and lent an air of comfort to the plain but substantial furniture of the apartment.

The supper consisted of the before-mentioned sowans, made palatable with a bowl of rich milk, bread and cheese, and butter from Mysie's dairy as sweet as a nut; while Mysie, who attended to them, though she did not join in the repast, kept asking about ships and the dangers to which Davie might be exposed from the unsettled state of the nations and our war with America.

"The Lord watch over him when we are absent one from another!" said the smith, reverently adding, "he's in God's hand, Mysie, an' there we maun leave him; an' what can we say, he wanted to try his fortune on the sea."

"That's true," said Mysie, wishing to be comforted, "an' no doubt he's as safe on the mighty ocean in God's care as he would be among us; but for a' that he's a sair miss about the place, though I aye tell't the maister there that Davie Gordon was born to be a gentleman, he was aye so clever, and had sic a winnin' way wi' him."

"Aye, Mysie," replied Uncle John, "he kent the weak side o' your sex. But it's when it's stormy I'se think maist about him," he added, "a' thae days last week I couldna get him out o' my head; an' Mysie gaed about saying, 'Oh, if it were the will o' Providence to send fine weather.' 'Deed," he continued slyly, "I saw Mysie was wantin' fine weather whether it was the will o' Providence or no."

"Weel, maister," said Mysie, "if it pleases ye, ye may say it; but, oh dear!" she added, "one or twa nights there was sic a chappin' at the bar—an' that aye forebodes a storm—I got fairly nervous."

"It's wearing late though," exclaimed Martin, when supper was ended, drawing at the same time from his breeches' pocket a large, old-fashioned

watch, and seeing the hour, "it's time for me to be steppin' hame," and so saying he rose, and his host conveyed him to the white gate, where they parted.

Gordon stood, after the smith left him, looking on the peaceful scene. The moon was full, and seemed to hang over the town wrapping in its soft veil of silver the mass of uneven and irregular houses, bringing out beauties of angle and depression as only its soft beams could do, while the sea lay quivering and sparkling in its silent light; and as the man gazed on all this, the thought of his boy now ploughing the mighty waves caused a tear to steal softly over his eyes.

CHAPTER VII.

“For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him.”—BOOK OF GENESIS.



HE grief of his relative for the loss of Davie, was, after all, deeper than Mysie's, though he tried to conceal it. The woman comforted herself by the hope that she would one day see the boy “a braw gentleman;” and though she had wept when he stood before her in his blue jacket, with his sunny hair clustering out from below his sailor's hat, still, in the secret recess of her heart, ambition was creeping in to reconcile her to his departure. “As if he should be here a' his life, a laddie like him!” she argued to herself.

And Davie looked wonderfully bright on things, for the world lay out before him like some fairy picture, and his eyes beamed with hope,—those eyes not brown, not black, not grey, but all three combined,—eyes that would have redeemed the plainest face, but, as has been before remarked, Davie's face was not plain, for he had an expressive mouth,

showing a row of beautiful white teeth when he smiled, and that was a perpetual thing.

God speed the lad on his voyage of life, he will need his good brave heart and willing arm to bear him through, for the bright rainbow tints that lured him from his home will fade from before him, or gather on the shores he has left behind.

Few were the blinks the people of Grey Craigs got of Davie Gordon, but happy he made them when he returned for a week or two and remained at the Glen while his vessel was repairing, or waiting for cargo. He was growing to be a fine young man "whose marrow," Mysie declared, "was no in a' the country," and proud she was of him when she sat beside him in the meeting-house, arrayed in some piece of dress he had brought her from foreign parts—aye, so proud was she that I fear the worthy woman received little benefit from the minister's well-handled discourse, even though it was divided into fifteen heads, which were again subdivided until their name was legion. Nor was Effie forgotten at those times by the young sailor, for her tiny arms carried bracelets, and from her neck were hung rich and rare shells gathered for her on the shores of Eastern lands; but dearer far than all these was the love of the strong man to the heart of the child, when she would welcome him with new delight on his return from every voyage, and putting

her little hand into his rough, hard palm, would nestle close to the bosom of her childhood's friend and ask him curious, thoughtful questions of the lands he had travelled in, and the wonders he had seen.

It seemed a strange and an unknown world to Effie—the one Davie now trod—and she tried to gaze into it with eager, puzzled eyes; tried to comprehend it, though it was so different from the life in the quiet home of her childhood, but somehow it would—that world of Davie's—get mixed up with the fairy tales that had won their way into that little seaport town and into the smith's cottage.

As we saw at the commencement of our story, the people of Grey Craigs, especially the Dissenters, were a simple, grave, religious people; therefore a child reared amongst them would necessarily partake of their spirit; and as Effie inherited much of her father's disposition, she was naturally reflective and thoughtful. Her temper was bold and impatient of restraint; but Martin did not spoil his only and idolised daughter, he held the reins with a tight, though loving, hand, and the girl knew she must obey; and thus doing, the smith, though an unlearned man, as the world might count him, proved himself to be a wise one, for he remembered him who said, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child," and that, "He who spareth the rod hateth his son."

In our days there is a slackening of discipline in the training of the young, of which our fathers never would have approved. Children are treated not as those who are unable to judge of what is best for their interests, but as matured men and women who must give their opinion as to what they ought to learn and what not; they must sit in judgment on the merits of their different teachers, while their indulgent parents look on with approval; at the same time everything difficult is removed out of the way of their tender feet. And yet, could these people consider, they are only making the discipline their children must encounter in the world a thing the harder to be borne, since they have not had the benefit of "bearing the yoke in their youth."

But though they could not have reasoned the matter, these old Dissenters in Grey Craigs acted differently, for they knew that man is best developed amid trials and difficulties at the beginning of life, as it is thus he is braced up and strengthened for the struggles and battles he must necessarily meet with in mature years. It is God's way of leading His own, and fitting them for heaven; His school is one of sorrows and defeats, "out of much tribulation" heightening the crown of all joy. And would man be wiser than his Creator? Ah! the "afterward" is blessed when to the chastening

rod His people bow, for the "peaceable fruits of righteousness" are then brought forth.

Effie was also taught amongst these Bible-loving people that no degradation could be attributed to any honest hard-working poverty; nor, on the other hand, was any undue importance to be given to riches, but that to fear God and keep His commandments comprehended the whole duty of man. Thus, amongst these unlearned though honest people the girl saw little that was mean or degrading, whilst the scenes of grandeur and beauty all around her gave to her fine poetical nature, unknown to herself, a feeling of awe and reverence for the Father and God of creation.

In speaking of the training of the young in these days, amongst such people in Scotland, we must not overlook the faithful preaching of the Gospel; we might now think it was hard and severe, for we live in times when men love to listen to smooth things; then it was different, it was law work that was insisted on, and that law work made our Covenanting fathers what they were. Then the Shorter Catechism was the text-book of their theology. They taught it to their children as they sat by their fires on the quiet Sabbath evenings, and often in the morning ere the day's work began. It is the fashion in our times to deride this book on which they set such store; we are wiser now, they say,

than teach the young such dry theology: but will the learned and clever men in this generation be able to give us a better than this? We will see.

Over and above this home-training, Effie received from the excellent schoolmaster of Grey Craigs and his sister the foundation of a good and substantial education, for that place, more than the most of others, was favoured by having a man of no ordinary ability for the teaching of the youth, and Effie being a favourite pupil received great advantages in this respect.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A visit to the blacksmith's shop in any country always repays one, and there the gossip of the neighbourhood is usually heard. In Africa it seems to be the same, and idlers always lingered about the blacksmiths."

—*A Walk Across Africa.*

"Free and fair discussion will ever be found the firmest friend to truth."

—G. CAMPBELL.



T was October, and the days were growing short, while the skies had the pale colourless hue belonging to that season. A sort of purple haze filled the air, enveloping the dark pine woods in its mantle, and as the sun's rays streamed through the brilliant colouring, birch and hazel groves were subdued and harmonised, while upon the hills hung a silvery mist, and the wind as it swept down in melancholy gusts waved it about in all directions.

It was the evening hour, and the shadows falling silently around had warned the labourers that their time of rest had come; and now the fields were emptied of their busy workers, their cheerful voices being no longer heard in the still, clear air.

Over the smithy of Grey Craigs the night clouds descended and the fire gleamed stronger and stronger, while the deepening light revealed more distinctly the figures that were gathered around ; as the flickering flame gleamed and danced upon the window, the children not yet called home by their careful mothers pressed their faces against the panes, and looked in upon the party, surveying them as they stood and talked around that cheerful blaze. There was an unusual excitement amongst those men that evening. The smith, older looking than when we last saw him, had ceased his work, and the sounds of the anvil ringing on the forge had been silenced for a time. In the centre of the group was a pale, half-starved looking man, who held a paper in his hand, and was proceeding to read it aloud, when Uncle John, who was amongst the number of the bystanders, expostulated with him, for the paper was one of those Radical ones which had been forbidden to be circulated.

"I tell ye, Alec Grieve," he said, "it's against the laws of the land to read the like o' that among us, for they just spread dispeace."

"Let's hear what Grieve has got to say," cried a lad ; "it's a bad cause that winna stand a hearing. Light that candle and haud it afore him, Jamie ; we would like to hear baith sides o' the question."

"What say ye, smith ?" said another one of the

group, a shepherd, who had recently entered and thrown aside his plaid and stick.

"Weel, though I dinna approve o' such papers being read here, we'll let Grieve get his way for once," said the smith.

Liberty being thus granted to him, Grieve began to read in a sort of canter, with a high-pitched voice which never modulated. Notwithstanding, the man being interested in his subject, the hearers listened attentively, only interrupting him now and then with a remark bearing upon the subject.

"Friends and fellow-citizens," he said, "you who by your loyal and steady conduct in these days of adversity have shown that you are worthy of at least some small portion of liberty, unto you we address our language and tell our fears."

"Small portion of liberty," said the smith, repeating the words; "I thought we had a great deal o' liberty; nae country is as free as ours."

"True for ye there, smith," cried a young ploughman, proceeding to light his short black pipe; "they would gie us freedom or else no; look at France an' its liberty."

"Let us hear though what they hae got to say for themselves," cried another voice; "read on, Grieve." And so Grieve, who had stopped when Martin began to speak, proceeded: "In spite of the virulent scandal or malicious efforts of the people's

enemies, we will tell you the whole truth ; they are of a kind to alarm and arouse you out of your lethargy. That portion of liberty you once enjoyed is fast setting, we fear, in the darkness of despotism and tyranny ; too soon perhaps you, who were the world's envy, will be sunk in the depth of slavery and misery, if you prevent it not by your well-timed efforts."

Here the speaker paused for a moment to take a breath, when a companion of Grieve's, a poor starved-looking wretch, exclaimed with an oath—

"Aye, that's true ; we've been slaves ower lang ; let us fight now for our rights and liberties ; down wi' the tyrants !"

"Do ye want a sail ower the seas, Neddy ?" cried a friend nudging the last speaker ; "for if ye dinna, ye had better keep your tongue between your teeth."

But Grieve having taken a breath went on : "Is not every day adding a new link to our chains ? Is not the executive branch daily trying new, unprecedented, and unwarrantable powers ?" (Hear, hear.)

"What does he mean by as mony lang-nebbit words ?" exclaimed one present. "How can he think unlearned folks can understand them ? 'Executive branch,' what kind o' tree does that branch grow on, Alec ?"

"On the tree o' liberty ower in France, ye stupid cratur," cried another voice.

Grieve, however, unheeding the interruption, continued. "Has not the House of Commons (your only security against the evils of tyranny and aristocracy) joined the coalition against you? Is the election of its members either fair or free?" ("Neither the one nor the other," cried a voice.) "Is not its independence gone, while it is made up of pensioners and placemen?"

"That is true; he's a clever fellow that wrote that," cried the tailor.

"When our poor are famishing for lack of bread, we are called to lay the burden of taxation heavier upon them, besides being asked to pay the debts of a prince who already has cost the nation a large sum, and now demands again that we give for this same purpose upwards of *six hundred and thirty-nine thousand pounds sterling*."

"Think on that—just think on that," was here muttered by the tailor in an excited tone.

"By it your commerce is now cramped and almost wasted," continued Grieve. "Thousands and tens of thousands of your fellow-countrymen, from being in a state of prosperity, are reduced to a state of poverty, misery, and wretchedness. A list of bankrupts (Bertram was here heard), unequalled in any former times, forms a part of the results of these quixotic expeditions. Fellow-citizens, the friends of liberty call upon you, by all that is dear

and worthy of possessing as men, by your own oppressions, by the miseries and sorrows of your suffering brethren, by all that you dread, by the sweet remembrance of your patriotic ancestors, and by what posterity has a right to expect from you, to join us in our exertions for the preservation of our perishing liberties and the recovery of our lost rights," and much more to the same effect.

When Grieve, having finished the reading of his paper, looked round the group to judge of the effect of its sentiments upon them, the smith said rather sarcastically—

"Weel, Alec, you've had your say, so I hope you are satisfied."

"But ye'll allow there's truth in it," said the shoemaker, who had joined them during the latter part of the speech.

"Down wi' a' government," cried another voice, and was answered by one calling out, "Liberty and equality for ever," while a third exclaimed, "Up wi' the green, boys," adding—

"What colours should be seen
Where our fathers' homes have been
But our own immortal green."

"Stop, stop, lads," cried the smith; "such language will never do here. If Government was hearin' tell o' this night's wark we would a' be banished.

Alec, it was my blame letting you read that seditious paper, which, after a', is a one-sided and windy production. Glen, you're a wise man, forby ha'in' a share o' learnin'; can ye no speak to them an' try to put them right?"

CHAPTER IX.

"The first point of wisdom is to discern that which is false ; the second to know and understand that which is true."

—ANON.



UNCLE John, thus called upon, came forward amid the now excited company and said, "Nae doubt there's a part o' truth, my friends, in what we have just heard, but if ye'll listen to me for a few minutes, I think I can say something for the other side of the story. We dinna like the war, I grant, neither do we like the taxes, and are sorry that they are so heavy ; but we've been fighting for our possessions, our glory as a nation, and something must be paid for that ; and the taxes are the price of our peace and prosperity, for without them we couldna hae a standing army nor a regular government. It's true they say 'do away with the king and government.' Well, I'm not greatly taken with the plan, for langsyne we read that when 'there was not a king in Israel, every one did what was right in his own eyes,' and a bonny mess they made o't, aye, and a bonny mess they're makin o't in France the now, where the mob has got the upper

hand, and no man's head is safe on his shoulders, be he prince or peasant, so I canna yet see the sense o' doing away with our king and government. Then about the taxes, nae doubt they're heavy, but it's easier to draw our purses than our swords, and to pay to be protected rather than hae our throats cut by foreigners, murderers, and robbers. 'Skin for skin,' said Satan, and he knew the heart of man ower weel, 'yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.'

"*Liberty and equality* is their next great plan, and they talk a lot o' nonsense on the subject, saying equality is the first law of nature, and that we were a' born equal. I deny that; I deny that it is the law of nature, or that we were a' born equal. I think variety is the law of nature, and we are a' born different. Has not God, as the Bible says, 'made one vessel to honour and another to dishonour'? Has He not, in His infinite wisdom, made one man to be born in a palace and the other in a hovel? Has He not made one man clever and one foolish? and unless every one was born with the same amount of brains, then it follows that the clever, wise, and prudent will win the race at the end, and the idle, profligate, and spendthrift will gang to the wall. Besides, there is the superiority of mind, which must always rule over those who are less gifted by nature. Then suppose that every one to-day had equal worldly wealth, it

would be different to-morrow. Say, for instance, that the tailor there has a careful son, and Grieve a spendthrift ane? Well, the tailor's would aye be gathering, and the weaver's aye scattering. So I wonder how long equality, supposing we had it, would last—some drinking and carousing, others saving and keeping what they hae saved; and now, lads," he said, "I'll tell you what a gude worthy minister said the other day in one o' our pulpits on the subject, if ye're no tired o' me."

"No, no, Glen; we're no tired," cried they all.

"Aye, do that," said the smith; adding, "Ye speak to the point, Glen; I never thought you and I were so near the same way o' thinking. I kent ye wer'na an extreme man, though ye were whiggishly inclined, an' sae I considered the folk would listen to you mair readily than to me, wha am a Tory; besides, I couldna express myself like you, no' haeing the learning."


"Weel," proceeded the farmer, being thus encouraged, "he spoke o' the cry that's raised the now in so many places about *liberty* and *equality*, and said that he would say little about *liberty*, for he knew no kingdom in the world that enjoyed more of it than we did, and it was sune enough to cry out when we were like to lose it; but he had a few words to say on equality, and they were these: he could neither see in heaven nor hell, earth nor sea, onything equal. Let us turn to heaven, he said, and

we have a throne, and Him that sat on it, wi' angels and blessed spirits standing round about it, showing no equality there. Then in hell there was the devil and prince of devils, and a' the wicked spirits, so there is as little equality there. There are the heavens next, and in them we have sun, moon, and stars, one star differing from another in brightness; on the earth we have elephants and ants, mountains and molehills; in the sea we have whales and whittings, sharks and shrimps. Ah! but there is one place, he added, and only one, where all are equal. Mony o' ye may get there suner than ye wad like, and, brethren, that place is the *grave*."

Uncle John here ended his speech amidst shouts of applause from his hearers. After a few parting words the party separated to their several homes. None of them were worse for hearing the farmer's calm, judicious arguments.

CHAPTER X.

“Oppression will make a wise man mad.”

“ LEC,” said Martin kindly but firmly, as he proceeded to convoy the weaver across the links to his cottage, “Alec, ye mauna attempt to read papers like that again in ony place that I’ve to do wi’. You’re Mary’s cousin, and we twa hae kent each other since we were bairns ; so, for the sake o’ auld langsyne, I let you hae your say the night, but I’ll never do it again, and we may think ourselves lucky if we get off without being punished. However, if we escape I’ll no regret it ; for I’m sure you, like some o’ the others, hae been convinced by Glen’s words ; so now let meetings alane and stick to your loom.”

“It’s easy for you, Will, to say ‘stick to your loom,’ answered the poor fellow sadly, “when I havena dune an hour’s wark for mair than a month, and my wife and bairns are starving. Surely it’s time something were dune somewhere to help us. I canna think but Government is at fault, in spite of Glen’s plausible arguments and polished words.”

"No doubt, Alec, times are bad," said his friend feelingly; "but how can ony Government help that? It's no in the power o' ony man or set o' men to regulate the markets, or either increase or diminish the demand for labour. That a' depends on things which only the Almighty can control; an' is it makin' things ony better to fly up an' down the country setting up peaceable folk against the king and the laws? Ye bring me in mind, you folk, o' the company that gathered round King David in the Cave of Adullam, where there was 'every one that was in debt'—well, it was a grand place for them—'then besides every one that was in debt, there was every one that was discontented.' A bonny unruly set he wad hae to be a captain owre. Ah! but," continued the smith thoughtfully, "after a', I needna quote David, for there's another way to that; there were grand men o' that company as well as the worst kind; an' I whiles think if there was a cave like that now, wi' a young prince like David, I for one would rather be wi' him than onywhere else. So ye see my argument has come to nothing as far as King David and his company are concerned. However, I still say, mind your work, Alec, and let others mind the laws."

"But what can we do?" persisted Grieve. "It's no easy, man, to hae a wife an' bairns crying for food, an' we hae naething to gie them. I dinna ask

for dainties; I only want meat for my starving family. I seek nae fine claes; I only want the coarsest, if it keep them frae the cauld; nor do I envy the rich and great o' their grand houses; but oh! smith," and here the poor man's voice quivered, "I doubt I'll sune no can keep a roof owre their heads. Now, Will," he continued, "you're a reasonable man, an' tell me, if ye dinna think it's hard that the necessities of life should be taxed, an' puir folk hae to starve? Our hearts are weel nigh broken wi' this state o' matters, an' mony a time I could lie down an' die, I'm so weary o' the world, if it werena for them sae near and dear to me, that still make life sweet wi' a' its trials."

"I am very grieved for you, Alec," answered his friend, speaking with much sympathy; "but as I said afore, naebody can help it; and the tide will maybe sune turn. Mind, the langest day comes to an end, and the langest lane will hae a turnin'; so cheer up, an' bear your trials like a man, or rather like a Christian. I have heard my father say, and I mind mysel', when puir folk lived in houses the farmers now wadna keep their cattle in, an' wark was scarce, an' what was, there was little wages for't—fourpence a day was then a man's wage. An' I ken we had naething to eat oursels, frae year's end to year's end, but meal, for even potatoes were scarce; yet naebody blamed the king or the Government."

"Oh! man, man, it's puir comfort that to gie a starving man,—to say that times were worse, or to quote a wheen auld threadbare proverbs, as if they could fill hungry bellies; we can only think o' the present pain and the dark future, which is ill enough to bide."

"God help ye, then," said Martin solemnly, "ye maun just put your trust in the Lord, Alec, when a' help o' man fails."

"I'm clean tired o' a' that cant," answered the weaver angrily. "I dinna believe in ony o' thae things; we've gotten new light on the subject noo, sae ye needna quote God or the Bible to me, Martin; thae doctrines hae had their day, and now they've failed. I believe them a', and sae do the wisest men o' our times, to be but fables; there's the Confession o' Faith," he added, "wha would sign that auld document in our days, its time is clean past; an' if there is a God, Martin, He's owre just a ane to punish folk that canna help themselves. No, no, smith, gie me the new light, and let wha will believe in your auld notions."

Martin was so shocked and startled with these words from the mouth of his friend, that at first he could not reply; at last he answered solemnly,

"Then you're in a very bad state, Grieve, far worse than I could hae guessed," adding ironically, "wise men—a new light—the Bible a fable—puir men,

puir Alec, where will ye drift tae next? ay, they maun be wise men, truly, that can show us this new light—new light, forsooth!—a farthing candle instead o' the sun; the Confession o' Faith an auld dune document, we'll put it aside when your clever men will supply us wi' something better; but until then, I think we'll keep it, though it's maybe no a' thegither perfect. And ye would set yoursels up to say to the Almighty what He should do, an' what He shouldna do wi' His creatures,—owre just to punish sin?—it beats a'—an' ye are sic liberal folk, an' we are so narrow. I dinna ken, I would rather believe in Mr. Campbell than ony body, an' he's learned enough, and clever enough, ye'll admit, an' see if he sets himsel' up, or thinks he kens better than the auld divines who drew up the Confession. Na, na, Alec, it's only shallow-brained, conceited fules that speak like that; an' ance ye kent better." And then he added feelingly, "Weel, I can only say this, it's a gude thing yer auld father and mother were in their graves or they heard ye speak like this." And then he put his hand on Grieve's arm and said kindly, "An' hae ye forgotten langsyne, Alec, an' how we used to gang thegither to the tent preachings, an' sit on the auld fauld dyke on the bonny hillside among the gowans, an' listen to the godly minister, till, Alec, I saw the tears running ower yer cheeks? An' hae ye forgotten your

mother's teaching on the Sunday nights when ye cam across for me, an' brought me away either frae foolish companions or sitting alane in my solitary lodgings, an' how your mother spoke to us when we gathered round her? Alec, Alec, will thae new teachers ever be like the auld, or will ony thing ye see by the light o' your puir reason be like the guid auld gospel—auld, but ever fresh and new, and the belief in which made our covenanting forefathers be shot among the hills, or be burnt at the stake? O Alec, but ye hae vexed me sair!"

"Thank you, Will," answered Grieve sadly, "for telling me o' my auld father and mother. Oh! it's true I hae gaen far, far away frae their lessons; but what can I do, I'm pledged to my party, and it would be cowardly to draw back."

"I dinna understand the kind o' bravery that would make a man persist in sticking to a cause against his conscience or judgment. Oh! beware and take warning in time; an' Alec, dinna cast away the gospel until ye hae something better to take its place. Keep in the auld tried ways, man, an' ye will find they'll lead you right. An' now, fare ye weel, lad, for here is your door; an' oh! may God be with you, Alec."

"An' fare ye weel, Will," replied his friend, wringing his hand warmly, "I, too, would say God bless you, if I was sure o' ane, or that He would hear me;

however, I ken ye will be blessed, for ye've been aye kind to me."

And so saying, the two men parted, Grieve to enter his miserable, cheerless home; and the smith to walk back to his happy one where peace and contentment reigned, because its owner feared God, and kept His commandments.

CHAPTER XI.

‘ By oppression’s woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free !
Lay the proud usurpers low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty in every blow,
Let us do or die ! ”

—BURNS.



THESE were the beginning of troubles in Scotland. While France had been convulsed with revolutions, and other states in Europe involved in tumults, Great Britain alone had been calm since her last disastrous strife with America; now, however, these peaceful times had suddenly changed, and there were indications of coming storms that threatened to burst in fury over the land; besides, there was the wish in high places for war with France. Republican opinions were everywhere making progress, and seditious writings were spreading over the country. Doubtless there were many and great abuses to be rectified, and at first numbers of the respectable and well-disposed inhabitants were not

averse to listen to such writings which contributed to render the French Revolution at its commencement contagious; but as time went on, the violent proceedings of the Republicans of France terrified these people, and made almost the name of reform hateful to them, which feelings increased in violence when the news reached England of the death of the king. This act and its attendant measures annihilated the spirit of Republicanism in the minds of a large class of the people in this country.

Still, there were not a few amongst the lowest and middle class of society that entertained them strongly, and the flames were fanned by the activity and confidence of the half-taught politicians with whom the age abounded. A stagnation in the various branches of manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, was occasioning severe distress, particularly among the labouring classes. This stagnation encouraged a spirit of discontent, which was kept alive by those turbulent and factious individuals who travelled through all parts of the kingdom sowing the seeds of discord and confusion; and this especially in the manufacturing districts, where numbers were collected together, suffering from commercial failures and distress. At the same time there were many of the young ardent spirits of the age who still approved of the revolutionary movement, giving promise, as they thought, of generous hopes and glorious anticipations;

and these men were as much averse to the extreme Radicalism on the one hand as to the old priest-ridden Toryism on the other. They felt indignant that in a free country like ours the whole political power was monopolised or well-nigh centred in the hands of a few particular persons who had the right to persecute or promote any individual or cause they pleased; and in the same way they had within their gift to bestow, when and where they chose, every pension and office in the kingdom.

But then, from the extravagance of the Radicals, it had begun to be dangerous for the Whigs, as they were called, to express their opinions, however wise and moderate, or to try to get the abuses of such a system corrected; and while many sympathised with the few brave spirits who stood in the breach to argue for the right, their sympathy had to be given in secret, for openly to express it was neither safe nor prudent. Mr. Ramsay, the schoolmaster of Grey Craigs, was one of those far-sighted brave men, who rose and proclaimed the truth, while such as Uncle John felt that the Whigs were right, and yet they durst not encourage them. The smith, on the other hand, kept to the old ways and to the oft-frequented paths. Ramsay quietly and calmly differed from those who would let things go on as they were and never seek to improve them, at the same time he took no part with the violent Radicals of Grieve's

party, who tried to stir up the people to violence; all that he and his friends wished and sought to obtain was "a redress of grievances in the Commons House of Parliament;" but even these wishes, moderate as they were, it was now beginning to be unsafe to utter.

Though Uncle John was more cautious than Mr. Ramsay, there was nothing he enjoyed more than a visit from the schoolmaster, for he loved an argument dearly and a political talk. Sometimes Mysie overheard these arguments, and always agreed with the visitor, which helped to make Uncle John rather doubtful of a cause when women took it up, saying, "they should stick by the inside o' the house, an' let the men manage the outside," though he whiles concluded with the remark, "nae doubt some women were as gude at formin' an opinion as a stupid man."

Meetings were then held by these turbulent spirits in great privacy in some wretched out-of-the-way corner; and every precaution was used, in case spies should get admittance and betray them to a government which looked with a jealous eye upon such combinations. The secrecy, sagacity, and resolution with which they carried on their bold enterprises were worthy of a better cause. Their fidelity at the same time to one another, under the strongest temptations from poverty, was still more extraordinary.

A few weeks after the meeting in the smithy, Grieve and his friends might be seen stealing by back ways through the lowest parts of the town to one of those secret conferences now considered illegal. Their place of rendezvous was an old barn on the outskirts of Grey Craigs. It was entered by a wooden stair, at the top of which stood a man who demanded the password from every one who sought admittance. A wretched enough looking place this was, in an almost ruinous condition; cobwebs filled with dust hung from the open rafters, and here and there a star twinkled in from a hole in the dilapidated roof, while a few farthing candles glimmered at intervals along the unlathed, unplastered walls, making only the darkness appear more visible. The company assembled seemed to suit well the place, being, with a few exceptions, composed of the lowest class of the people; having haggard, flushed faces, and strongly impregnated breaths,—poor, starved, despairing men, and many of them gloomy and ferocious looking.

A platform was erected at one end of the apartment, and on it stood a small table with two brass candlesticks, a jug of water, and a tumbler. Flags were hung against the walls, and bore such mottoes as "Liberty and Equality!" "Death to Tyranny!" "Scotland shall be free!" &c., while the principal actors in the scene wore scarfs and bows of green

ribbon, the badge of republicanism. After waiting a few minutes, a door near the platform was opened, and a good many men entered and took their seats on the chairs placed there for their use. They seemed to be, in point of dress and education, superior to the mass of their hearers; but in a few, the wandering, cynical look in their eyes bespoke too clearly cunning and treachery. Immediately one of the party rose and proposed that Mr. Hardy, a middle-aged, shabby-looking man, with a bloated and unhappy expression of face, should take the place of honour allotted to him. This he did, and called upon Mr. Hall from London to address the meeting. Mr. Hall got up as requested, and coming to the front began exclaiming in a loud voice, his right arm outstretched and his left in the breast of his waistcoat, and, though sinking his *h*'s and putting an *r* occasionally at the end of his words, was undoubtedly a well-educated man; but he looked so self-conscious—so far from being in earnest amongst those rough, earnest men, that the impression he gave was unfavourable. "Gentlemen," he began, while a voice from the crowd shouted, "No mony o' them here." "Yes, gentlemen," he repeated, "for we are all born equal, and equal shall we be some day if ye will quit yourselves like men. It is only the wretched, paltry, mean laws of the State that makes a difference." ("No sae sure o' that doctrine.")

"Yes, my friends, it is Equality—the twin brother of Liberty—which is the birthright our fathers purchased with their blood; and are we calling ourselves the sons of such sires? are we to be trampled upon, to be tyrannised over? Equality is the grand secret of every Government; no man should be greater than another, for we are all free-born Britons." (Question, "Are ye no Irish?") "And what prevents this law being exercised? Nothing but tyranny, my friends, oppressive, grinding tyranny, with the laws and monopolies of society. Why should we not be all kings and nobles? Look at me, have I not blood and brains? have I not an arm as strong as the king? Why then am I here, and he on the throne? Has not a beggar as good a right to a palace as a prince or a peer?" (Hear, hear.) "I say he has; I say it's injustice if he's kept from it. Yes, my fellow-citizens, I say again he has," he repeated with extravagant gesticulations. "Then rouse you, shake off the fetters"—(loud and deafening applause, until the old rafters rung again)—"freedom is every man's birthright. Now, where have we it? Look, for instance, at our public roads; we cannot pass along them but we are charged a sum—true, it's a paltry sum, yet every few miles we are obstructed by this infamous tax." (Voice, "Ye should walk on your feet, then, an' naebody will ask yer siller; it's the rich that drive in carriages that pay; aye, better

men than you hae had to gang on fit.") "But why should we not all drive in carriages as well as the rich? The rich have wealth and honours, the poor are dying for want of bread, or suffering from the tyranny of some usurping master; let them be brought to one level, let their goods be taken and divided amongst the poor." (Hear, hear, and applause, with mutterings of, "He's speaking perfect nonsense now; the thing's impossible!") "Do I hear a voice saying the thing is impossible? Let the person who said so prove it." ("It's no ill to do." "Speak out, then," cried another.) "Yes, my friend, show us,—we are open to conviction,—I am willing to be taught, but it would be difficult to prove me wrong. I have studied the thing too well." At this point a voice in the crowd cried out, "Ye need nane o' John Lean's prayers." "What did John Lean pray for?" asked another. "Do ye no ken?" was the retort of the first speaker; "he prayed he might aye keep a gude conceit o' his sel." After declaiming in the same style for some time, Mr. Hall sat down amidst hisses and applause.

The next speaker was Scotch, one of their own townsmen, and without having the flow of language or the multiplicity of words of the last, his speech was more telling, because the truth was set forth without exaggeration. He took a calm view of the

abuses of the times and the corruption of the State ; spoke of the utter prostration in which they lay respecting their civil privileges through the representatives in Parliament, saying it was not a free Parliament, but was rotten to the core. The young rising minds of the country were on their side, he assured them, but they dare not speak out their grievances. They must be mere machines. Their poet Burns, whom most of them knew through his songs, had been told by the Board of Excise when he was expressing some opinions favourable to the freedom of the country, that his business was to *act*, not to *think*. But could this last long ? Could they keep the free-born Briton from *thinking* and *speaking* out too ? Their cause must in the end prevail—it will finally triumph. There must be a just balance of the three great impelling powers—Kings, Lords, and Commons. . If one of these is absolved by another, the Constitution is gone. The representation of the people is not what it once was, and is not what, I trust in God, one day it shall be.” (Hear, hear—great applause.) He took up the corrupt influence of the court, and said that it was an influence which has been substituted in the room of wisdom, of activity, of exertion, and success ; an influence which has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength, but which, unhappily, has not diminished with our diminution nor decayed with our decay.

Spoke of the evils of war. "The one so lately ended having plunged us in debt and taxation, and the king and Parliament wishing again to commence hostilities with France, only to add to our burdens," asking, "How are men for these wars procured? Look at our fellow-countrymen in the Highlands compelled to enlist. Do you remember the way they were then treated? It was so cruel as almost to make the blood of every freeborn man and woman boil with anger and indignation. Some had their feet held before a hot fire until extraordinary torments made them agree to these nefarious measures; others they imprisoned and starved and chased like wild beasts on the hill. Thus the poor people were compelled to die or yield. Is this liberty? Is this freedom, my friends?" Adding, "And then have we not that hateful system of the pressgang, tearing sons, husbands, and brothers from the hearts of those that love them to be food for the cannon's mouth, that our ships may be manned for unholy warfare?" He then said Government was afraid of them; as well it might, for Britons might be long suffering and enduring, but sooner or later they would rise like the lion, shake its mane, and tear its prey. Yes, Government might well be afraid. Only in some instances it was like the thief who fled when no man pursued. It was only the other day some wag alarmed the Town


Council of Edinburgh by the news that a large number of the "Friends of the People" had arrived in Leith and were on their road up the Walk to attack the city. The Council was in great terror, and sent for a detachment of soldiers from the Castle, who marched down to meet the enemy ; but instead of a lot of ill-disciplined, half-starved weavers, they met a few carts of fresh herring, of which that morning there had been an extraordinary take.

This story was received by shouts of applause, and after a few more speakers had addressed the meeting, it broke up about midnight.

In the morning the old barn looked the same as it was before, all appearance of the evening's assembly having been completely obliterated.

CHAPTER XII.

"Their happiness consists, not in a multitude of friends, but in their worth and choice."
—ANON.

" HAVE come down to stay this afternoon with you, Miss Ramsay," said Effie Martin, as she entered the schoolmaster's room one fine summer evening.

"And very glad I am to see you," answered her friend, "and so will George be when he comes in. He was wondering the other day what had become o' you."

"Time passes so quickly," was the reply; "a week seems scarcely begun until it is ended, and when my father is at home, he likes me to be beside him; but he's away to-day, so I just came off. And how's the maister been this while back?"

"He hasna' been sae bad," answered his sister, helping to put aside Effie's wrappings, "but you know he's never very strong at the best."

It is twelve years since we saw Effie last. Then she was a child, but now she has sprung up into a woman, and is already famed as the belle of the neighbourhood.

Some people said that she was formed on too large a scale, and when the first bloom of youth would be past, she would become coarse ; others found fault with her complexion, saying it was too dark, for her cheeks, through which glowed a roseate hue, were brown, and her eyes were dark, though large and soft. As it was, just now Effie was the prettiest girl in the circle in which she moved ; but admiration had not spoilt her, for the training of her father and Miss Ramsay had, without making her sad or morose, showed her that life was a serious thing, that beauty was nothing of which any one might be vain, and that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit was worth far more than any outward appearance of painted cheek or fairest skin.

Soon the two were seated in the pleasant little parlour of the schoolhouse, with its splendid view seen through the clustering rose-bush which half veiled the window. Spread out before them lay the sea, one prevailing tint of blue coming softly in with friendly ripples over low, dark jutting rocks. Moving lightly between it and the sky went slowly on a passing ship, its white sails filled with the fresh breeze, while some specks of fishing-boats appeared beyond the high craigs where the sea-mews have their homes. There had been a shower as Effie passed over the links, and the long-bladed seaside grass looked refreshed, while the sand drank it up

greedily. Now, as the wind swept through the leaves and branches of the rose-bush, driving a few drops upon the panes of glass, the fragrance breathed from these flowers floated through the room, which was plainly but neatly furnished. An old mahogany clock kept up a continued "tic! tic!" in the corner, while the other was filled with a cupboard, wherein was displayed the china of the family; over the mantle-shelf hung a framed sampler, on which was sewed, in different colours, a shepherd with his sheep, a specimen of Miss Ramsay's needlework while at school.

Effie had drawn from her pocket some fine linen wristbands she was stitching, and her friend lifted the blue "rig and fur" stocking, and talked while the needle flew like lightning through the work.

The schoolmaster's sister had a thick-set little figure, a broad, clear forehead, and happy bright eyes. Her voice was soft and pleasing, and though the pronunciation was provincial, people soon forgot it listening to her interesting and instructive conversation; for Miss Ramsay had learned wisdom in the best school, the school of Christian discipline, and she had that rare quality of being able, out of the deep contentment of her own nature, to make others content also. Then no one ever felt uncomfortable beside her, she had the happy knack of setting every one at ease. Some people, even good people upon

the whole, have the very contrary effect; they are always making you feel small in your own eyes, with not a salutary smallness, while all the time they think themselves faultless. I don't believe such people are sorry for the world's wickedness; I think they are rather glad of it as a foil for their own perfection; these self-righteous folk could have no sympathy with Mrs. Browning's beautiful lines, though they might have applied to Miss Ramsay—

“She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that hung by her gown.”

“It's always such a bright, cheerful room this,” said Effie, “and I think I never tire watchin' the sea and listenin' to the sab o' its waves. The neighbours laugh at me for likin' it sae weel; they say unless some ane's on it they are expecting hame, they never think on't.”

“I like it now,” said her companion, “though I thought it eerie enough at first, and wished I could look on something else or hear some other sound than the sough o' its waves. Somehow they used to make me feel dreary and think on the loving and the brave they had swallowed up; for ye see, Effie,” she continued, “our hame had been among the hills, where ye saw little but the sheep and the wild birds and the burn wimplin past our door, and heard

nought but its quiet ripple, or the cry o' the muircock among the heather."

"Is it very long since you left it?" asked Effie.

Miss Ramsay smiled as she replied, "Time seems different when ye see it frae youth than it does when one gets auld. You think it long to look forward twenty years; I think them short to look back on. They appear like a dream. Jacob said when he stood before Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been;' but I whiles think, Effie," she continued, "that it sounded something like ingratitude to God to say his days had been *evil*, though they nae doubt appeared *few*. He had had his trials and crosses, like us a'; but, Effie, it's no gude for ony o' us, either for this world or the next, if we're let alane. It takes a steady hand and clear brain to carry a full cup without spilling it; let us be thankful when the Lord empties us a wee; and after a' we'll say it has been far fuller of blessings than we deserved."

"As far as I hae come yet in life," said Effie thoughtfully, "I have had much joy and little sorrow."

"Aye, but wait a bit, Effie," replied her friend, "and your time of trouble and sorrow will surely come if you're to be amongst the blessed in heaven;" and here Miss Ramsay lifted the Bible, saying, "Ye

mind what answer was given to the elder in Revelation when he asked, 'What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they'?" And then she read aloud a few verses, "'And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them into living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' And then, Effie," she continued, "there are promises to help us in times of trial, such as, 'As thy day so shall thy strength be;' or, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee.' 'Deed the Bible's fu' o' them. So we must leave the future in God's hands for weal or woe, and feel that all shall be well."

"I hae heard ye say, Miss Ramsay, that trouble an' grief came soon to you."

"Aye, it did that, Effie," replied her friend; "but I think I weary ye wi' my auld langsyne stories, though I maun confess I like to speak about them. Ye see I am so much mysel', for George has his books, an' at the best he never was a man

o' mony words ; so I'm pleased wi' a listener like you, Effie."

"An' I like to listen. Someway I am aye better after I have been here ; ye put things before me in such a true light," said the girl smiling.

"Thank you, Effie," replied Miss Ramsay, and then she went on to say, "Our sister Peggy died when she was a bit young thing. That was our first trial, Effie, and we were very rebellious. We have had mony since, and I would fain hope we are learning submission ; but this ane, oh ! it was sair on us. She was my only sister, and we were never separate. She began to dwine and got aye weaker and weaker, but we never ance thought o' danger, for she seemed so full o' life and happiness herself. At last my mother—for my father had been long dead—got alarmed, and sent for the doctor. He came, a gruff but kindly man, and told us she had nae mony weeks to live. So my mother broke the sad tidings to her, for she said she couldna allow her to gang dreaming on o' life when it was to be so short. I'll never forget that morning, Effie, in our house. The sun was shining so bonny on the hill-side where we used to play, and lighting up the purple heather growing among yellow brakens. I mind o' looking at it, but I didna take it in then, nor indeed did I take in onything except the heavy tidings we had just heard ; and yet is it not strange

I have often thought of it since, and the smallest particular of that day—the very crowing o' the cock in the yard, the very smell o' the sweetbriar that came in at the window. Peggy couldna at first understand her death-warrant, and when she did comprehend my mother's words, she gave a loud scream as if some one had struck her a heavy blow. Then she rushed to the attic room we ca'd our ain, and was there a lang time. What took place was known only to herself and her God. When she came back, after some hours' absence, her face wore a calm, peaceful expression, and she said, as she threw her arms round mother's neck, 'Mother, the bitterness of death is past; it has lost its sting; but it has been a sair, sair trial to part with life so young. I thought, mother, oh! how I thought and wished to try that unknown future lying spread out before me; but now I can say, "Thanks be unto God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and, trusting to Him, I will tread the dark valley and will fear no evil, for His rod and His staff will comfort me.' After this," continued Miss Ramsay, "Peggy seemed to belong more to heaven than earth, and she died exactly that day three months she got her sentence. It was a dark, dark day; aye, dark though the sun shone bonny again on the hills now lying white wi' the first snaw; but I couldna look at them; they seemed to mock my grief. I

wished it had rather been wild tempests and drifting rain. I aye wish that, Effie, when onything vexes me, for somehow I think thae things agree better wi' my feelings ; and yet," added Miss Ramsay, "after a', Death, when he comes now in the beginning of life, disna seem to be the hard thing to me it ance did. He comes ere the world grows cold and hard and the feet weary on the journey, or ever they have kent what it was to bear the burthen and heat of the day. He comes like a white-robed angel to waft them away from what are at the best but earth's vain pleasures, to those that are eternal in the heavens ; from broken cisterns here, to a river whose streams make glad the city of our God. After Peggy's death, my brother Archie had never a day to do well ; she had great power over him, and he missed her so sorely, he couldna think o' staying about the place ; an' after a time of recklessness he met in wi' a recruiting sergeant and listed, and gaed off to the wars. This broke my mother's heart. Ah ! Effie," added Miss Ramsay, "a dead sorrow is nothing to bide like a living one. I can mind now o' Peggy an' my father and mother, a' them that are dead, wi' comfort and a kind o' sad joy that they're now hame at last to the Lord's country, never to suffer pain or sorrow mair ; but puir Archie, mony a nicht I lie and think about him. If he's yet in this world, what hardships will he no hae come through ;

but a' that would be naething if I only kent that he had seen the error o' his ways and was resting his hopes on the 'sure foundation, the tried corner-stone, elect, precious.' Many a mile I wad travel by sea or land to see him, and mony a prayer I put up for him, asking God that if we never meet here again we may meet an unbroken family in heaven."

"Is it lang since ye heard o' him?" inquired Effie, deeply interested in the conversation.

"It was before we came here," answered her friend, "which will be thirteen years at Martinmas. I was telling ye," she continued, "that my mother died, and I think grief killed her, for she never looked up after. George was educating himself for the ministry, and trying to help us at the same time; and oh! Effie, nae doubt he had a sair struggle. I believe mony a day he had naething but a pickle meal to serve for breakfast, dinner, and supper; but he never tellt us what he suffered, he was ower manly for that. An' then, when he was licensed, he had nae patrons to push him into a kirk."

"My puir maister!" said Effie musingly; then she asked, "Do you never gang back to your auld hame? I think, if I had to leave Grey Craigs, I wadna like to be sae far away that I couldna come back at a time and look at the auld familiar places."

"I never have been back," answered Miss Ramsay, "and what use would there be in my going, since it

canna bring back our bairn-time again. But I see it in my dreams, Effie, an' mony a night I think I am playing by the auld saugh-tree, where my mother used to seek us, and bring us hame to our beds in the gloaming, when we fell asleep to the music o' the burn; an' whiles I think I'm gathering king's-cups and gowans on its braes. Ah! Effie, it is only natural, as we grow auld, that our hearts gang back to the days o' our youth. Look at King David. When he was near the close of his life and finishing up his work, he didna say, 'The prayers of David the king of Israel are ended,' but, 'The prayers of David the son of Jesse;' at that moment nae doubt forgetting a' about the greatness and glory o' his reign and the triumph o' his victories, of his cares and sorrows, of which he had his share, aye, and his sins too, deep and dark as they were, but minding only his life in his father's house, when he was a laddie herding his sheep on the hills of Judea; aye, and besides, I daresay he felt that in the eyes of the great and mighty Lord, where a peasant, if he keeps His commandments, is as good as a prince, that he was only the son of Jesse, though he had been chosen of God for that high place wi' naething o' his ain that he could boast of. But though I own to this turning back to the days of our youth, I wadna care, as I was saying, to gang back and see the auld place. I often think," she continued, thought-

fully, "when I read o' the foolish virgins coming and finding *the door shut*, that here in this world how often is the door shut; for we can never bring back circumstances that hae changed. We hae been happy some place, and wad gang back, thinking that happiness wad return; but no,—our friends hae left or are dead, or something else has happened which gies us a heart-sickening, the worse to bear that we lookedna for disappointment. Weel, ye see, Effie," continued Miss Ramsay, "I am taking ye at your word, and preaching ye a sermon."

"But you're happy here among us," said Effie, wishing to console her friend.

"Oh yes, bairn, very happy," was the reply, "for ye are a' kind to us; but I grudge George no being able to follow out his inclination for a preacher; everybody thinks he is so clever, and it's hard for me to see him hiding his light under a bushel."

"Yet," urged Effie, "I hae heard you say, Miss Ramsay, that it is far better to be gude than either great or learned; and our minister was telling us on Sunday that a' required of us in this world was to 'fulfil our course;' for he was preaching about John the Baptist, and he explained to us that fulfilling our course was just to be content to do our duty in the place, and way, that was appointed for us. He told us that it was a rough enough journey the Baptist had through life, ending with a bloody death,

such as he hoped would never fall to our lot; yet John never repined, or thought it a hard way; so if we kept in the path Providence had laid out for us, and did our duty as far as we were able in it, nothing more would be required of us in this world. And surely," continued Effie, "if onybody is in his right place, it's Mr. Ramsay. Look at the gude he does here. I believe the young fisher-lads would gang through fire and water to serve him. Ah!" added the girl, "it is maybe this, that he came through the hards himsel'—that is often the secret of influence."

"Weel, it was trials and sorrows that made George the man he was." And then she went on to say, "I dinna ken, Effie, if ever I telled ye about the bonny, sweet lassie my brother liked sae weel. She was the sister o' ane o' his college friends, and a born leddie. Her father and mother, indeed a' her friends, looked on George as ane o' their sels, an' never thought he wasna their equal. An' it's the same to this day, for they make him aye spend his vacations wi' them, an' if they had had influence they would get him on; but they are English folk. However, to gang on wi' my story. Elsie, for that was her name, fell into consumption and died, and my brother's hopes for this world died wi' her. Effie, she had the first o' his heart's love, and the last was buried in her grave. It almost broke my

heart to see how deeply this love had gone down to the very core of his—twined itsel' wi' his very being; an' weel I kent that for her sake he would live a single, solitary man, starved in family ties. There are no mony men ye could find like this, but there are some, and George is ane, and I kent frae the first he would never forget her. He seems contented now, at ony rate calmed down; but O Effie! I, his sister, can see how the sweet composure o' his youth has settled into the harder gravity of manhood. Maybe I might hae left him for another hame, but I couldna, Effie. We were the only two in the world, and I felt how sad and dreary life would be to him if I forsook him; so I crushed back hopes that otherwise might have blossomed in my heart."

"O Miss Ramsay!" exclaimed Effie, "how little can we guess the secrets in another's life!" and the tears were running over the girl's cheeks. "My puir master! I wondered how wae he whiles was, wi' a far-away look in his eyes. I little thought of his sad loss."

"I canna mourn now, Effie," said Miss Ramsay, "for I feel so sure that the Lord will do with us all what is right. Ye mind what the Psalm says, 'He led them by the right way to a city of habitation.' It is the right way, though we think it rough and hard. After a', Effie, as I said about Peggy, it's maybe no sic a difficult thing to die when the roses

o' love and youth are blooming; better maybe then than to wait till they fade—till they have seen the sun of hope set before noon, and weary for death to come and end their sorrows and trials."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Ramsay, who welcomed Effie, and inquired after the health of her father and friends.

If Miss Ramsay felt disappointed at the failure of her brother's hopes, one could see no signs of discontent on his face, and a remarkable one it was, scored with marks of determination and energy; forehead high and square, dark, resolute grey eyes—the eyes ever allied to genius—well-marked eyebrows, straight nose, and nostrils that expanded and quivered, a decided mouth, broad cleft chin, fair hair, now well mixed with grey. No one could look at him without feeling that it was such men as he who were well fitted to stand at the helm and steer the ship over the ocean of life. Sturdy and independent he was too, with an external shyness which hid below it the warm kindly heart full to overflowing with love and tenderness. Aye, the "hards" Mr. Ramsay had passed through, the disappointments, the trials, had made the schoolmaster of Grey Craigs the man he was. Though he was conversant with not a few of the dead languages, a mathematician of no mean order, an astronomer, and acquainted with all the abstract

sciences, yet he was utterly unworldly, and content to bury his talents, and day after day go through the round of duty, teaching a village school. Effie had been a favourite pupil of Mr. Ramsay's, and she, on her side, regarded her teacher with reverence and esteem. He was an enthusiast in Scottish song, and often, when wearied with his dry abstract studies, it was a great pleasure to him to take his violin and get Effie to warble some of those old ballads of his country, to which her rich voice gave fine effect; and when thus engaged a light would steal over his face, all the more pleasant, because when in repose it was grave and sad.

The time passed happily away with music and singing, while the hostess prepared the homely "four-hours," which consisted very much at that time of curds and cream; for tea in those days was a rare commodity, known only to the rich.

Every now and then Miss Ramsay paused in the midst of her labours to listen, and at last she exclaimed, "I never know what's about these auld tunes to me, for whenever I hear them I mind o' the mavis that sat and sang langsyne on the thorn tree opposite the window at Blinkbonny."

"It's just because they're familiar to you, Annie," answered her brother. "I often think that much of the charm of music is association."


"I will sing you a verse of a sang I got the other

day," said Effie; "but it's only a verse; they say it's mony a hundred years auld;" and so saying, she sang—

"A weary bodie's blythe when the sun gaes down,
A weary bodie's blythe when the sun gaes down;
They smile wi' their wife, an' they daut wi' their weans,
Wha wadna be blythe when the sun gaes down?"

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying.”—ST. PAUL.

“  E'LL gie you a convoy, Effie,” said Miss Ramsay when she saw her young friend preparing to return home. “ George will be the better o' being enticed away from his books this fine night, for I think he hurts himself poring over that dry Greek and Latin and these weary problems.”

“ You see what a careful sister I have, Effie,” said Mr. Ramsay smiling; “ so to please her I will leave my books, and we can saunter along until Annie overtakes us; for she is too good a house-keeper to leave windows unfastened and door unlocked before she leaves.”

Though fuel had to be put upon the fire, clothes brought in from bleaching on the green, and sundry other necessary trifles completed, it was not long before Miss Ramsay overtook Effie and her brother, and all the three walked leisurely along, enjoying

the fresh sea-breeze and the calm beauty of the summer evening.

They passed the old harbour whose time-worn boulders were spotted aloft with brown lichens, the growth of centuries, while below, where the tide reached, barnacles and mussels stuck to the grey, shining stones, and long slippery festoons of seaweed, hanging from small cracks and crevices, floated away on the dark-green waters.

While they stood, and looked, and wondered how long that harbour had braved the storms, Miss Ramsay exclaimed—

“The heads are neither sick nor sair this day that planned these auld walls.”

“Yes, I often think,” replied her brother, “that such things stand as if to mock the littleness of man. How many generations have passed away since these stones were raised! It is like a voice saying to us in the words of Solomon, ‘All is vanity.’”

And now they approached the timber-yards, where boats are being built and tarred, and the never-ceasing noise of the hammer is heard among the voices of workmen and the hearty laugh of the sailors; they pass the fishermen’s houses, at whose open doors sit the wives and daughters mending nets, and watch the group of men hauling out an invalided boat beyond watermark, to be patched up before

it rides again upon the sea, and the brave fellows trust it to bear them in quest of those shoals of herring by which their children live. And now they have come upon the low reef of sunken rocks, matted and tangled with slippery seaweed, brightened here and there by crystal pools of salt water. They reach the open beach, where the tide, as it comes and goes, rolls the pebbles up and down upon the shore, while the little boats lying at anchor close by curtsy and dance on the waters.

"I had almost forgotten to tell you," said the schoolmaster, as they were getting to the end of their walk, "that young Gordon is to be home soon. It seems he has been rising fast in his profession of late, and is mate of the vessel. They also say that he is a brave, fine fellow, and saved two or three lives lately at the risk of his own; so he will be quite a hero at Grey Craigs."

A thrill of pleasure shot through Effie's frame as she heard Davie praised, for she remembered his early kindness to herself; at the same time the pleasure was mixed with sadness, as she felt how the young man was rising in the world, and was even now above the little community of his friends who loved him so well. A gulf was opening at her feet; she knew it at that moment separating her from Davie.

And it is always thus when one who has been dear

and close to us, a sharer in our joys and sorrows, leaves us to occupy some sphere we may not reach. When the brother in his manhood leaves the sister behind in the childhood's home, from whence the light of both has fled, or the sisters are parted to go forth in different ways to form new ties, new companionships, a gulf as wide almost as the grave has separated all that was dear, and the world seems now a cheerless, empty place.

Mr. Ramsay then continued the conversation, adding musingly, "He'll find Uncle John aged; but we must not expect to meet friends as we parted from them. I think it is because we overlook the changes that absence and time make upon all that we are so often disappointed. We stood and saw the companions of our youth depart for some distant land, and we watched them till even the keen eye of love could no longer detect the handkerchief waved as a farewell signal, and we said and thought we would never forget, for their last sad words were in our ears, and the tear from their eye scarcely dry on our cheeks. But years pass, and they come again, not the same as they went; they have seen many a strange face and gained many new friends, and we too are changed; time has cooled down the fire of youth, and we have learned much of the cold wisdom of the world, and become suspicious, quick to detect wrong; for alas! we are no longer the

frank, loving youths, but the calm calculating men of years."

"Our brother Archie," said his sister, "would he find us changed, George, were he to come back? O Archie, Archie!" she added, "I couldna change to you; my heart is no aulder, though my hair is grey."

"And will Davie be changed?" asked Effie sadly; "but he must be, when he's turning a great man."

Yes, Davie Gordon was changed, doubtless, but not for the worse. He had seen God's wonders in the deep; he had been in many lands, among palm and orange groves; he had seen many strange faces and looked into strange lives; but he had kept his childhood's heart clean, and his faith firm in his childhood's God; and now that, after years of absence, he walked upon the deck of his ship which was nearing port, his thoughts were going forth with a strange yearning to Grey Craigs. He has learnt much of the rough life and ways of sailors, and seen them in their worst moods, when lips that had learned to pray at their mother's knee had changed the prayer to a curse; he has seen them reeling and rollicking until his soul sickened at the sight; but he has also seen something grand, often about the worst, that has made him slow to condemn. He has seen courage and patience, and often a reckless flinging away of their own lives to save others; indeed there

had been a bond of sympathy between him and the worst, for he knew that without a moment's warning they might all go down to a common death, or that a few months might scatter them who were companions now over the face of the world.


They were nearing port; the man at the wheel was steering his steady course, and the watch were smoking, singing, or spinning yarns, as it suited their humour, Davie felt he had little in common with his crew; he could guess something of their life on shore; knew from their tales and chaff something of their haunts; but his thoughts, when he could spare them from his duties, were of Uncle John and Mysie, and his old life in the smithy of Grey Craigs, when Effie was an infant, and he tended her with such care. And then he wondered if she would be much grown, if she would remember him; and so, while Davie Gordon is pacing the quarter-deck and steering his ship into the harbour, the three friends sauntering along the Links are speaking about him, and Mr. Ramsay makes answer to Effie's wonder if Davie would be changed—

“Yes, he must be, and you are too, Effie; you were little more than a child when he was last here.”

“An' she's little mair than a bairn yet,” remarked his sister, as they bade Effie farewell at her own door, and took their way home again through the Links.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them."—ISAIAH.

 HAE brought ye two or three bits o' things for the bairns, Mrs. Grieve," said Effie Martin the next morning as she entered the weaver's cottage carrying a bundle under her apron.

"O Effie!" answered the poor woman, "I'm ashamed o' your kindness. But for you and your father, my bairns might mony a time gang without meat or claes."

"Ye forget," replied the girl, opening up her bundle, "what your mother-in-law did for my mother when she was a bairn. It would be ill our part to forget such kindness; but indeed," she added, "it's little, after a', we do, and no worth speaking about. I'm no over-burdened wi' work at hame, and it's wonderful how a stitch now and again helps on one wi' her hands full o' bairns;" and then she inquired, "Is Alec at hame the day?" adding,

"But I needna ask, for there is no sound o' the loom."

"No, truly, ye needna ask," answered the wife sorrowfully; "he doesna work now when he has it, though I must own it is scarce enough. O Effie!" she said, while the tears trickled over her cheeks, "if onybody had cause to hate thae ways and thae meetings, it's me. Afore Alec took up wi' them there wasna a happier family in a' the place than ours, nor a kinder man than my husband; and now, look at our house. I have had to part wi' bit after bit o' my furniture to keep my bairns frae starving; our fireside is heartsome nae langer, for a' fear o' God has left it, and the auldest laddies are following their father's example. But for Jessie, we might a' hae been deid for hunger. Puir Jessie! she is made the sufferer as weel as me." She then continued bitterly, "They speak o' rulin' the nation, I wish they would rule theirsels an' stick to their ain business."

Effie remembered Mrs. Grieve so lately a tidy, contented wife, with a comfortable home and pleasant, obedient children, and now, as she looked on her, she saw how greatly she was changed, as well as was the appearance of the house. It was neither untidy nor over-neat, but it had a look as if the owners were trying to make the best of life out of the scantiest materials. Though it had not the curtained

bed and chest of drawers and dresser of decent, rather well-to-do poverty, neither had it the rags and dirt of degradation. Mrs. Grieve must have been a comely woman in her young days, but her face was now pale and pinched, and her dress mean and scant, while the children were running about the doors poorly clothed, playing with the questionable companions of the neighbourhood.

"It's very sad," exclaimed Effie, in answer to the woman's remark, "an' I dinna ken what I can say to comfort you. I aye hope Alec will take himself up again, an' gang back to his respectable life. But where's Jessie the day?"

"She's away wi' a gown she has been making for Miss Minnie Brown at Langacres," replied Mrs. Grieve. "If it werena for Jessie, Effie, I might lie down and die, but she keeps baith the bairns an' me frae starving."

Just then the door opened, and a slight, pale girl, seemingly about Effie's age, entered and warmly welcomed the visitor. It was Jessie Grieve, Effie's great friend; whom she loved as a sister, and soon the two girls were chatting away as if there were no such things as care and sorrow in the world.

Mrs. Grieve left them to entertain themselves while she busied herself preparing the scanty meal of the household.

"Davie Gordon's hame, Effie," said Jessie, as, after

resting a few minutes and putting aside her bonnet, she began to shape and cut some work she brought out of a press; for Jessie was a dressmaker, and it was the money thus earned that enabled her to help her mother in her housekeeping.

A well of joy sprang up in Effie's heart at the words Jessie had spoken; she could not help it; her hands trembled, and the colour deepened on her cheek. She remembered how the young sailor used to carry her in his arms to the sea-braes and help her to gather the pretty shells; how he used to tell her of his longings for other lands, and the dreams of what he hoped to do, and what he would become; and then came a sickness of heart when she thought again of the difference between them. Davie had been gone many years since then; he was now twenty-five, had risen to be mate of his vessel, and had done deeds of daring at which she felt a great exultation in her heart; and yet all that had made a wide separation between them—she, with her little world of Grey Craigs—all she had known of life, with her father and the simple people around her. Still she had had the big ocean, and the hills, and her love of nature, and books, and intercourse with Miss Ramsay and her brother to fine her down, and cultivate her above the commonality of the people with whom she associated. But Effie did not argue anything in her own favour; she only thought

of the immeasurable distance, growing every year wider, between her and the only brother she had ever known; and so the joy of seeing him again was darkened with sorrow. Jessie, however, was too busy to notice Effie's manner of receiving the news, and added, after a pause—

“I met him on the road to the Glen as I came down. It's five years since he was here last, an' we were but bairns, still I knew him, though he couldna know me. I fancy we maun ca' him Mr. Gordon now, though; but, Effie, ye maun put your best foot foremost for the young sailor.”

“I wonder to hear you speak, Jessie,” answered Effie gravely, “as if ever Davie Gordon would look at me if he wanted a wife. Ye must consider how he has risen in life, and I am but the smith's daughter; forby they say he is coming hame to marry Miss Minnie Brown.”

“I dinna believe a word o't; no that they're no very much taken up about him. When I was there the now, it was ‘Mr. Gordon this,’ and ‘Mr. Gordon that;’ ‘deed, every second word was Mr. Gordon. I couldna help laughing, Effie, when I looked at their sunburnt skins and coarse sandy hair hanging ower their green een, an' I thought ‘Gordon's no the man to look the side o' the road ony o' ye are on;’ and, Effie, I made them real angry, for I said naebody doubted but Davie Gordon would come hame an’

marry you. I wish you could hae seen how they flounced and tossed their heads, an' said, 'A smith's daughter is no match for Mr. Gordon;' but I said, 'If he pleased himself, no other body need care.'"

"O Jessie!" exclaimed Effie in distress, "how could you be so cruel! I am sure Davie would never think of such a thing; the Miss Browns are quite right."

"'Deed an' they were quite wrang," persisted Jessie, "an', Effie, ye ken fine ye're the bonniest lassie in the place, and that a grander man than Davie Gordon can ever be would gie something for a blink o' yer e'e."

Effie looked vexed and annoyed, but Jessie went on, "An' I tell't them, Effie, how kind he was to you when you were a bairn, an' o' my Auntie Bell reading your cup ae night, an' aye seeing a sailor in it, and a ring, and a lot o' things. I didna speak though, Effie, about a' the crosses an' the tears she saw in it besides; but I hope she was wrang there."

"That was the only part likely to be true, Jessie," said Effie, laughing at last at her friend's enthusiasm, though she was not without some belief in it; for so it is that everything like fortune-telling has a charm for those to whom the great and expanding future holds enwrapped the whole story of life, and unknown to herself, in after years, this cup-reading of Jessie's aunt's rose up sometimes before her, though at the time it only amused her.

"But my auntie is seldom wrang, Effie," answered Jessie; "you have no idea how often her words come true."

"Well, what about Charlie now?" asked Effie, glad to change the subject; "an' how is he getting on?"

"He has aye plenty o' work, an' he's real kind, Effie," said Jessie sadly; "he says he couldna ask me to leave them at hame till something better turns up. Oh! I wonder I can be sae cheery in the middle o' a' this sorrow, for my mother is far frae strong, and my father brings little in. I am sure I wish he would let other folk mind the affairs o' the nation; and then, Effie," she continued, "I am aye wae for Charlie; I ken he's no comfortable in his cheerless room. Oh! if it was only mysel' that was to suffer, I wouldna heed, but it's him; an' he'll never gie me up, he says, what would life be without me; so wi' ae thing and another I am often dull enough, but sometimes again I forget there is such a thing as care or sorrow in the world; it takes a heap to crush hope out o' the young heart; I aye keep trusting that better days will come."

"You've a brave spirit, Jessie. I do wish better days would come to you," said Effie, "and better ones to us a'; for in Church and State the now there seems naething but quarrelling and confusion. What wi' the outcry against Government, and this weary controversy amongst us about signing papers, we

hae nae peace onywhere. I fancy it's because we are women-folk we dinna concern oursel's about these things; and yet I needna say that either, for there's Mysie at the Glen, I believe she thinks them that differ frae her are waur than the heathen; and when she and my father meet they do nothing but quarrel. Times are changed wi' us greatly."

"I hae nae head for politics," said Jessie; "and besides, I live such a busy life, I hae little leisure for takin' up wi' what's going on; and though my father does little else than rage against kings and governments, placemen and parties, I canna help thinking it's a bad cause since it's so sorely changed him. O Effie! it's hard to speak against ane's ain father; but when ye consider how, from being one of the kindest and best of men, he seems hardened against his ain flesh and blood, what can ye say? I can see he's breaking my mother's heart. Effie, ye may be thankful for a hame where God's name is revered and His laws obeyed."

While the girls were speaking Grieve's step was heard advancing; he was evidently much the worse of liquor, for he was spluttering out in broken language, while a crowd of children followed him laughing and shouting, "Down wi' a' ty-tyrants, free-freedom to the sl-slave, f-f-freedom for e-v-er," imitating his words.

Effie put on her bonnet as fast as possible, for she

knew Jessie and her mother would be ashamed of the poor wretched man being seen by her in such a condition, and before Grieve stumbled into his comfortless home she was hurrying along the road to her father's cottage.

CHAPTER XV.

" Ours was the glance none saw besides,
The smile none else might understand,
The whispered thoughts of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand,
The kiss so guiltless, so refined.

.
The tone that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine,
The song celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine."

—BYRON.

" Why did she love him ? Curious fool ! be still ;
Is human love the growth of human will ? "

—*Ibid.*



COULD it be wondered at if Effie stood a little longer than usual at her mirror that evening, brushing out the soft delicate cloud of rich auburn hair ? She folded it back from her brow, and wound it into a simple knot behind ; and then having put the room in order, she sat quietly down to her sewing, waiting her father's return.

Effie Martin had not to lead the life of many

young girls in our days. She did not need to complain that there was nothing in this busy life that she could get to do, and so disturb her mind with visionary plans and schemes of usefulness—to be saved from *ennui*; and it was good for her, and it is good for every young expanding nature, with its noble hopes and dreams of limitless possibilities, when it has not to sit and long for romantic combinations—to wish for something out of the ordinary course to happen, to open the way to a more real living—a taste of the exquisite pleasure which arises from being of some use, having some place in this working world of ours. No; Effie needed no such plannings and wonderings, for, with the sole charge of her home, she led a delightfully active, useful life. But she had her times of relaxation too; and when she sat down to her sewing, waiting for her father's return, her mind wandered into fields of pleasant dreams, from which she was only recalled by the entrance of her father and Davie Gordon. Her first thought, when she saw the young sailor, was to start up and thrust out her hands with eager enthusiasm, but the next moment she burned all over with shame, and felt an inclination to run out of sight; Davie, however, remembering her only as the child he had loved so well, threw his arms round her as he used to do on his return from his voyages, and kissed her warmly; then holding her a little from him, he looked at her

so long and earnestly, that the hot blood rushed to her cheeks.

"Ye're no my wee Effie now," at last said Davie with something of a sigh. "Mysie said I would find you changed, but she didna tell me you were grown so bonny."

"Tuts, tuts!" interposed the smith; "ye mauna put nonsense like that into her head. Lassies' heads are fu' enough o' sic stuff without being encouraged. If she's gude it's better far than being bonny, for beauty is but skin deep."

"Effie was aye gude, though," answered the young sailor; and Effie blushed and glanced timidly up into the frank, kindly face smiling down upon her, pleased more than she could express with such praise. Ah, well! let the truth be confessed, a woman perhaps, above everything in this world, holds the dearest, praise from the lips she loves, and she does not often stop to balance how much of it is deserved.

There was little of the smith's old apprentice of years before in the handsome, manly, sun-browned, bearded man who now sat by the fireside. Everything seemed changed but the eyes and the smile. The eyes! yes, they were the same in their truth and depth, looking so honest and straightforward; and the old smile, it was there too, lighting up the face that without it might be plain. But his speech had lost its provincial tone, and he had much the air and

bearing of a gentleman, which Mysie had prophesied he would one day be. They were not long left alone, for, just as of old, a few friends began to gather round the hearth. Mr. Ramsay first, who was heartily welcomed, and then Uncle John, who had sauntered down from the Glen to have a talk amongst those friends.

"Ye must tell me all that has taken place in my absence," said Davie, during the course of the evening. "I would like to hear what you are doing and thinking, and what about Whigs and Tories now. I have been lang away, and I have much to learn."

The smith, turning to Mr. Ramsay, deputed him to be spokesman.

"But you forget that I don't agree with you in many things," replied the schoolmaster, laughing.

"Never mind that," said Uncle John; "the smith will tell Davie his way of it when ye have told yours, and so between you he'll come to some understanding o' our quarrels."

I have said that in politics the schoolmaster was a Whig, though strife and contention were foreign to his retiring studious nature, and therefore his voice was seldom heard in the arena of debate. Still he was most decided in his opinions, and took a calm, cool look at things, judging for himself, as few men were more able to judge.

Besides civil politics, another matter was then

disturbing the people at Grey Craigs, as in other places, and that was the dissensions among the Seceders as to the duty of signing the declaration of loyalty which the Government then was calling upon the people of Great Britain to subscribe. Mr Ramsay, though a member of the Established Church, felt he had most in common in his religious belief with the Seceders; he took therefore a deep and intelligent interest in the controversy, and many of them were glad to have the opinion of one so well fitted to give it; so when called upon to tell Gordon the state of matters in the country, all listened to him with courtesy and deference. He gave a short sketch of the strong political excitement then caused by the French Revolution, which, like the heavings of an earthquake, was convulsing the nations of Europe; spoke of the jealousy of kings to the word *freedom*, and of their having, in all countries, recourse to severe measures to suppress the popular movement, dreading the safety and stability of existing institutions. The friends of loyalty and order were asked to come forward in this emergency, and show their sympathy and their adherence to Government by signing a declaration to that effect.

Many of the people gladly responded to this call, and amongst them some of the Seceders. But a large portion of that denomination had conscien-

tious scruples against such papers, declaring them inconsistent with the testimony of the Church; while others maintained that by doing so they were acquiescing in the ecclesiastical supremacy claimed and exercised by the sovereign, and that, as such, it was a sin for them to acknowledge either it, or the right of the civil magistrate to interfere in the matter of religion. And this controversy had been marked with much angry feeling and many bitter words. The numerous discussions amongst Burghers and Anti-burghers now taking place were almost as bitter and uncharitable as the contentions which had rent the Secession Church in 1745, when the two bodies split about the question of the propriety and non-propriety of taking the burgher's oath.

At this point Uncle John said, "I hear plenty about the quarrel, I can tell you. Mysie says it is a sin to sign ony papers commended by Government, for it is setting up the king as a ruler over God's Church and the consciences of His people."

"Mony a ane agrees wi' her," replied the smith; "and they are welcome to their opinion, if they will give other folk toleration; but that is no part of their creed, and so they quarrel wi' everybody that differs from them."

"So I see ye have not changed your politics, Mr. Ramsay," said Davie Gordon, laughing, adding, "I wonder Martin has not made you a Tory."

"Never a bit of it," replied Martin, "ye might as well think to move a mountain."

"I am open to conviction, I am sure," was the answer of Mr. Ramsay, "but none of you can convince me. I will appeal to Uncle John, if our laws don't need amendment. Look at the case of Sandy Galter, when, his wife and bairns were perishing with hunger, he killed a hare to save their lives, and if you, Glen, had not hid him in the barn-loft amongst the straw until you got him out of the country, he would have been hanged for his crime."

"He broke the laws of the land, though," said the smith, "and so what can we say?"

"Try to get these laws altered," answered Mr. Ramsay; "they are a disgrace to a Christian land." Adding, "There, for instance, was that case which happened the other day (you might notice an account of it in the newspapers), where a poor half inebriate was hanged for stealing a coat from a door. He was starving from the cold, and did not know what ill he had done. I don't defend theft, but when I read in the Bible, 'He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' it appears to me that only for murder should any one suffer death. Indeed, Gordon, though it is treason to say it, I feel that the whole system of Government is rotten at the core. We are like Israel in ancient times"—and here Mr.

Ramsay lifted a Bible from the corner of a shelf near which he sat, and read aloud in a solemn voice, "And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep : and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you ; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." Then, shutting the book, he added, " And what better is this militia business, and the press-gang, and all these abominable contrivances to enslave the liberty of the British subjects. Such are our kings, our taxes, and our tithes, just what the kings in Israel were, and they were little better than tyrants. Look, for instance, how Solomon did. When we read of the grandeur of his court, it's like a fairy tale, and all his riches and splendour, and the people were only his slaves. Then if we look at his dealings with other nations, we'll see the same want of faith that we are showing. Look how he cheated Hiram, a better man than himself."

" Our country, ye see, must be protected," said the smith, "and what can Government do ; rather some men suffer than a' the nation."

" Let our kings judge in righteousness, and then our people will suffer willingly," answered Mr. Ramsay. " It's a shame to bring on an unnatural

war, and force men into it that have either not been trained or have no stomach for the work."

"Such as our friend, Broomieknowe, here," interposed Uncle John, laughing. "Ye mind, smith, what he sewed inside o' his coat—when he went to the militia, 'This is the body of Thomas Telfor of Broomieknowe, to be returned to Grey Craigs at the earliest convenience.' He never doubted, puir Thomas, but he would be killed, so he thought that would secure him a decent burial among his folk."

This story made the party smile, and restored them to a better and more cheerful humour, which Uncle John perceiving, followed it up by telling of a fair day when this same Broomieknowe, having drank rather freely of a too intoxicating beverage, became outrageous and was taken to the jail, which was then the vault of the auld kirk, and how lustily he screamed through perfect terror not to be confined in that ghostly place.

"You have got a new jail, I hope, now," remarked Davie Gordon, "that was a disgrace to the town."

"It was, indeed," remarked Mr. Ramsay; "but we have a new one at last. The old one was a wretched place—many a poor creature got his death in it from cold." Then turning to the smith, he

said, "Well, now, Martin, you see it was an improvement. If you Tories had your own way, you would never have any of these changed. You always quote to me the words of Solómon, 'Fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change.' But I say to you, 'Let the king rule in the fear of the Lord,' and then we will be content."

"Well, I must say ye are aye reasonable and speak to the point, Mr. Ramsay," said Uncle John. "Were a' the folk that wanted reform as temperate as you, we would carry everything our ain way; it is the Radicals that are doing the mischief wi' Government. There's Alec Grieve, and men like him, leaving their wives and bairns starving, and haranguing up and down the country: it's no to be denied that we have grounds for complaint, but if a man's house was on fire, surely he would be an idiot that would blaw the flame and make it burn the brighter."

"I think I have been well away," said Davie, after he had listened attentively to the conversation, "for it seems to me that you are in a very disturbed state hereaway."

"Weel, it's the same everywhere just now," said Martin. "I dinna ken that we're either waur or better than our neighbours."

"But now, lad," said Uncle John, "tell us some-

thing about yersel and the countries ye've been in, some o' your ain adventures."

"Yes, Gordon," said Mr. Ramsay, "tell us how you saved the lives of the men ;—we heard something about it, but very little."

Gordon's brown face flushed. He never cared to tell stories of his personal adventures, and what else could he say.

"I did nothing, absolutely nothing worth relating," he answered, "hundreds would have done the same."

"We won't let you off," exclaimed the company, "you must tell us."

Thus urged, Davie told in few words of their vessel being wrecked on a dangerous coast, and he, being an expert swimmer, succeeded in saving one or two from the angry waves of a raging sea. Davie inquired in turn about all his friends, and heard their various histories, laughing heartily when he spoke of his old acquaintance Bob the ploughman, married some years before to Tibbie, the girl who had been Effie's nurse, saying, "He was a good sort of fellow upon the whole, but very soon roused to anger. I tried his temper sorely, indeed I wonder now how I escaped with my life, for he did not care what he did when in a rage. He thought he could do everything, and all the time he could do nothing but draw a straight furrow, and he, like other self-

confident men, was always bragging—puffed up with conceit. When we meet with such fellows on board our vessels, they are a grand prize for the wags among the sailors, and their pride is soon taken out of them.”

Effie sat and listened attentively to the conversation, though she took no part in it save by her intelligent eye and kindling cheek. She lived in old-fashioned days, when the young were trained to keep silence before their elders, and to show a deference to age and wisdom. However, when called upon by her father to get supper ready for the party, she quickly and cleverly covered the table and spread out the homely meal, attending quietly to the comfort of the guests.

When ten o'clock sounded from the old church tower, the visitors left the house for their different homes, and the smith, taking down his large Bible from the shelf, where it occupied an honoured place, read a chapter from its sacred page, following the reading by a simple, earnest prayer, in which he gave thanks for the safe return of his young friend from the dangers of the deep, and commended the distracted Church and country to the watchful care of the Shepherd of Israel.

Effie, after she had “gathered the fire” and bade her father good-night, went up to her little attic-room, and before she retired to rest drew aside the

curtain of her window and looked long on the fairy-like landscape stretched out before her, bathed in the silver light of the moon, while the still soft air was filled with the murmur of the burn which wound round a corner of the house, the pleasing monotony of the sound only broken now and then by a voice proclaiming the town still awake and astir. There was something like witchery in the time and place, and as Effie lingered and gazed, I fear thoughts of her old friend Davie Gordon obtruded themselves upon her mind more than she herself approved.

And how felt Gordon to Effie now, since they had met after years of absence?

"She's bonny, far bonnier than I thought she would be," he exclaimed, in answer to Mysie's question when he entered the glen kitchen that night, adding with a voice of interest, "But, Mysie, I doubt she is ower bonny to have been passed by. Has none o' your landsmen ta'en a fancy to her, do ye think?"

"Mony a ane fancies her, but I never heard o' her fancying ony. It's even said the young laird o' Briary Park wad gang far enough for a kind glance o' her eye, but Effie has been ower weel brought up by her worthy father to look at the like o' him."

"Do ye mean Arthur Harvey?" asked Gordon, remembering his old friend of the smithy long ago.

"'Deed, the very same," said Mysie; "and a grand-looking man he is, and a proud one too, as are they a' at Briary Park."

"And what right has he," asked Gordon in angry tones, "to fancy a village girl? Let him keep amongst his own set."

"You're right there," answered his friend, "an' 'deed, Davie, if ye're wise, ye'll stick in for her yersel; mind, 'Faint heart never won fair lady.'"

"Weel, I think," he said, laughing, "that after a', I hae the best right to her; naebody cared for her like me when she was a bairn."

"Ay, that ye hae," replied Mysie, "an' I aye said ye would come hame a grand man some day an' marry Effie, but the maister laughed at me. Weel, yer ain will no gang past ye, that's ae thing clear, an' if it's so ordained yere to get Effie, the hale world couldna' separate ye. An' I can tell ye this, whae'er gets her will be a happy man, for though she's so young an' bonny, she's a heap o' sense, an' her head's no the least turned wi' a' the admiration she gets. I often think," she added, "she has been much indebted to Mr. and Miss Ramsay; they have taken such pains to gie her education beyond the common."

"Weel, Mysie, ye'll speak a gude word for me, will you not, for the sake o' langsyne?" answered the sailor, as he took the candle from the hand of his

friend to light himself to bed ; but he, too, before returning to rest, looked out on the same lovely scene as Effie viewed from her window, and thoughts of the young girl filling his heart at that moment, he vowed that she, and she alone, would be his wife.

It was a life's story begun for two human hearts.

The Heavenly Weaver was sitting by the loom to superintend and guide the forming of the web, which must, thread after thread, be woven ; and thus it always is ; the web of our life is woven for us ; threads may be broken and tangled, which we, with our poor mortal fingers cannot join together again. But God can, and God alone, and in the end we will see the full pattern, though made up of small things—minute mosaics, to be most perfect and complete, and only one which the Eternal hand could have put together.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Beware of jealousy. It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on."—SHAKESPEARE.



AVID Gordon had been going and coming to the Glen for some weeks, while his vessel was being reloaded in a neighbouring port. When at the Glen he never failed visiting the smithy at Grey Craigs, to have a talk with his old friend Martin, and get a sight of Effie, to whom he was getting more and more attached. But she was too shy and quiet in his presence, he could not make out whether or not she viewed him with feelings deeper than friendship. Sometimes they met at a neighbour's house, but Effie, keeping amongst her young companions, seemed, as the young sailor thought, scarcely to recognise his presence, and yet, had he known it, not a word he uttered, not a movement he made, had escaped her notice; but she was proud—it was her besetting sin—and she felt that Davie Gordon was getting above her, and making a name and position in the world, and so she would not let him be fettered to her—he might marry, she

thought, the best in the land ; so she reasoned and argued, and kept out of the road of her old friend, or, if they must meet, she was either reserved and cold, or else petulant and saucy—which women are pretty sure to be when they try to cover up with words their true feelings—though very often she could have bit her lip after she had spoken. Then, Davie, having set out on the wrong track, was sent farther and farther off by every word, not being able, bluff, honest sailor that he was, to detect below all this only a fine feminine artifice, and, like a man thinking he was never missed, turned off in a clumsy huff, and tried to be interested in some other girl of the party ; besides, he felt that he had a formidable rival in Arthur Harvey, though he could not, in any way, blame Effie for encouraging him either by look or manner ; indeed, so far was she from being pleased or flattered by the attentions of one so much above her in rank, she hated them, and, in every way she could, avoided the presence of the young man.

When Davie and he chanced to meet at the smithy or any other place, they felt a mutual enmity to each other which they never strove to conceal, though at times Davie's better feelings conquered, and he had a not unpleasant recollection of the boy who, in spite of the difference in their birth, had made him his equal in the old days of the smithy when Effie was a child.

One evening, it was a pleasant June afternoon, Jessie Grieve looked in at Effie's home and asked her to give her a convoy up the Den, whither she was going on some of her errands. Effie immediately put on her bonnet and shawl and accompanied her friend, enjoying the sweet freshness of the evening. They passed along the links, where the turf was bright with the pretty white eye-bright, lilac cranesbill, pink and white liquorice, purple thyme, bluebell, and orange buttercups, all these combining to make a brilliant mosaic beneath the long sprays of prickly stemmed wild roses which were streaming in the soft wind, while the sea was flowing in with a soft musical *whish* against the rocks, dotted here and there with snowy-winged seamews.

The two friends walked along, chatting over the topics which interested them, until at last Effie stopped, saying—

"I canna gang ony farther wi' you the night, Jessie, for, look, the sun's nearly set, and it will be time for my faither's supper when I get hame."

"Come on a wee bit yet," said Jessie, "and ye may meet Davie Gordon, and get his company back, for he's to be at the Glen the night, and this is the road he is sure to take."

"Then, that is the reason why I should gang back just now; I wouldna like Davie to think I would

want to meet him; if I had kent that, I wouldna ha'e come. How did you ken about it?"

"I met Mysie the day, and she said Uncle John had had a letter frae him. But, Effie, let me tell you, I dinna think ye use Davie weel; onybody wi' ae e'e may see he likes you, an' yet ye gie him nae encouragement; a man disna like to be slighted; it's a different thing to be forward and impudent, from being saucy and indifferent. If ye dinna take care, ye'll lose him."

"He may gang," said Effie; "he may look after Miss Mimie Brown, that he seemed so ta'en up wi' the other day."

"Now, Effie, that's no fair," said her friend, "for I could see he was only paying her attention to provoke you, an' a' the time he was watching, and heard every word ye spak."

"I dinna believe that," answered Effie; "I dinna think he cares a bit for me."

"Weel, if he didna," persisted Jessie, "what for is he jealous o' Harvey? I'm no sure, Effie, but he thinks ye like him."

"Like Harvey?" exclaimed Effie in distress; "O Jessie, how can you even me to such a thing? No, no, Jessie, Harvey only wants a bit of fun, what does he care for the smith's daughter but for amusement to himself? Would he seek a mate in as low a place? What would his proud mother, Lady Anne,

and his prouder sister say to me? Besides, ye ken he's troth-plighted to Miss Lilian Arburthnot, or rather to her lands; for he, they say, cares little for her, an' as for her, puir thing, she wadna ha'e gi'en ae kind look o' young Oliphant for a' Briary Park an' its broad acres."

"Weel, weel, guid-nicht," said Jessie, "an' think better o' Davie Gordon, Effie."

The two friends then separated; Jessie to go further on her way, and Effie to retrace her steps down the Den, by the same path which Davie had trod years before, when he ran to fetch Martin home to his dying wife.

That evening Effie would fain have lingered, she thought she never heard the song of the birds so sweet, for they had not yet gone to their nests. But then she felt she would not like to be overtaken by Davie Gordon. He might think she had gone to meet him, for what right had she to be alone in this place at that hour; she had no business, like Jessie, to call her forth, and a girl in her rank had no leisure for solitary walks, and so she walked smartly forward, listening to the sweet music of the thrush, and saw the sun's last rays tinging the landscape with a golden light. A great peace and joy stole into her heart, for love was there touching the world with new beauty.

Effie had not proceeded far when on turning a cor-

ner she saw, on the path immediately before her, Arthur Harvey walking to the village. She would have drawn back and waited until he was out of sight, but unfortunately her footfall, light as it was, had been heard by the young man, who started back and joined her on the path.

"Effie! Effie!" he exclaimed in triumph, "am not I a lucky fellow this night? How long I have sought a chance to see you yourself, but you are as shy as the wild birds I shoot. You will never give me an opportunity of seeing you and speaking to you."

"What can Mr. Harvey get to say to me—the smith's daughter," said Effie, proudly drawing herself up; "surely there cannot be anything in common between two folks so far separated by birth—the one a gentleman, the other a labouring man's daughter."

"Effie," cried the young man, "love laughs at such distinctions. You know as well as I can tell how long I have loved you, for hear what that Radical fellow Burns says—a true poet, nevertheless—

" ' Gleg as light is lover's een
When kind love is in the e'e.' "

"Mr. Harvey!" exclaimed Effie, "you have no right to speak to me like that, I will not listen to you; gang you on your road and I will gang mine.

You who are already troth-plighted to Miss Lilian Arburthnot"—

"That's my father's doing, not mine, Effie," said the young man with a shrug of his shoulder; "and troth I care little for the lady and all her lands, it's you I care for; if you'll only smile on me I'll be happy."

"Mr. Harvey, I'll not listen to you," said Effie indignantly, "and you have no business to stop me on my road when I tell you I dinna care for you, nor never did. You know I never gave you encouragement to speak like this to me, so let me pass, I would not any one saw me speaking to you here."

"But, Effie, consider me, have some pity on me; you might have come to love me but for that fellow Gordon," and Arthur uttered an oath which made Effie shrink yet more from him; and yet she raised her head proudly, for she felt how different were the two men, and she rejoiced in the love of the young sailor, so unlike the shallow sham of the other's affection.

"I dinna know that Davie Gordon cares for me," she said, "but I know this, you're not worthy to be named in the same breath wi' him."

And so saying she tried to rush past him and get rid of his attentions, but, seeing this, Harvey was about to place himself before her in the path, when

a hand seized him by the collar of the coat, and a voice exclaimed in anger, "Touch her at your peril!"

It was Davie Gordon who, returning from his vessel, had thus opportunely come to Effie's rescue. Though he had not heard anything of the conversation, he only saw Effie wished to go away, and Harvey wished to detain her. The two young men stood and glared fiercely on one another, and Effie, now well-nigh breaking down with joy at her deliverance, exclaimed—

"O Davie! come away, never mind him!"

"I am much obliged to you for your interest in me, Effie," said Harvey mockingly. "And now I will leave you to your more favoured lover," hissing out, "I will make you both rue this."

"Let him go!" cried Effie, seeing Davie about to follow Harvey, at the same time seizing him by the arm to detain him.

"Well, I will, when you wish it," said Davie.

And Harvey, bowing to both, walked off leisurely, while Davie and Effie took their road down the Den: Davie feeling sore and jealous, wondering what could have taken Effie out at that hour, and how she had met Harvey; and Effie, vexed for the joy she had shown by being relieved by Davie, and her face tingling with shame, caused by the last words of Harvey, "I will leave you to your more favoured



"Touch her at your peril."—Page 150.

lover." So they walked on in silence until Davie broke it by saying—

"I didna expect to meet you and Harvey in the Den, Effie."

"I didna expect it mysel'," she answered shortly and with dignity, "and now I must be quick, for I have been longer than I intended." She had got breath and could say that.

"So you are wearied of my company already," answered Davie, with vexation in his tone.

She walked on, answering nothing.

"Have I offended you, Effie?" exclaimed Davie at last, when she still kept silence.

"Offended?" she answered with a quick short laugh. "I think ye mock me, Davie. I can never be grateful enough to you for coming when ye did, and saving me from Mr. Harvey."

"It's what I would have done to onybody;" and he was going to add, "an' far more to you."

But Effie did not listen to the other part of the sentence, so she said haughtily, "Thank you, Davie Gordon, I am sorry you have been troubled wi' me," and then she bade him good-bye, and hurried away.

The young man stood and gazed after her, but he somehow felt he lacked courage to follow her.

"It's clear she means to keep me off," he muttered angrily, taking a different direction.

And Effie, in spite of her strange, wayward, and,

she felt, ungrateful conduct, was happy; her whole sky was filling with light—she could have sang like a bird, and yet she had answered frowardly. It will come to rights somehow, she thought, and she went home gayer hearted than she had been for long.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Ye never spak a word, John,
My trusting heart to win ;
But ye lied before the Lord, John,
And that was deeper sin.
Your hand lied seeking mine, John,
When naebody could see ;
An’ ye pressed it mony a time, John,
An’ wasna that a lee.”—ANON.



FOR some months Gordon's vessel was lying in the Roads, and he going back and forward to Grey Craigs; and these, notwithstanding the difference in the Den, had been strangely enchanted months to Effie, with words floating in upon her half-dreaming senses, scraps of conversation, attitudes, looks of which she was scarcely aware at the time, but afterwards rose up before her, and would remain when their sunshine has passed away.

Still the time had not been altogether unmingled pleasure. All day she went about her household duties waging a constant battle within herself; sometimes doubting if Davie cared aught for her, and again thinking he was too far above her—she

feeling in the humility of deep and true affection that she was not worthy of him. Then, as the evening drew near and he came not as wont, though she never stood looking out of door or window to see if he were coming; hardly conscious, her whole life was a watch and wait; when the long summer twilight faded away, and the dews grew chill, a dull soreness gathered and spread about her heart, everybody else that could come, came startling her with successive shocks of certainty or disappointment, and she avoided with marvellous ingenuity any place or walk or visit that should fill up the twilight hours; then the joy when he arrived and joined the circle by the ruddy firelight, with the eye ever watching her movements. These were happy days, and she scarcely noticed them at the time, for, when we look back, we find happiness to have been a calm visitant, coming mostly in serene days, and among scenes and people where we did not look for it, and did not then recognise it to be such till after it was gone, and then we discover we had not the thing itself, only its semblance.

But as the "course of true love never yet ran smooth," Davie and Effie were not exempt from the common lot; they too had their trials and difficulties. Davie, man-like, was jealous and exacting, and flirted with all the pretty girls to try Effie, and she as determinedly strove to conceal her feelings and to pre-

serve an air of the most unruffled serenity, as if she cared not where he went, or with whom he laughed and joked. One good thing, Harvey had left to join his regiment, so he was no longer in the way to complicate matters; still Davie had other sources of annoyance. If the young people were watching from the quay for his boat in the evenings, he turned away disappointed and unhappy because Effie alone was absent, and her face was the only one he cared to see; and yet had he known she had been gazing for him more ardently than them all, and when others had forgotten him or were wearied looking, she had strained her eyes over the waters, sometimes it might be mistaking the wings of the sea-gull for his white sail, at other times deceived for a moment by the foam of a breaker; and she had only disappeared into the house when he might have detected her upon the shore. Ay, and had Davie seen, too, sometimes the weary look in her eyes, he would have been satisfied. She seemed like one who for many days and weeks had borne on her heart—not a heavy load that is easier to bear, but a restless struggle, sometimes joy, sometimes pain, doubt, fear, expectation, wild longing, followed by blank endurance; it was now she had learned the meaning of those bitter, bitter, dreary words, “The hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.”

It is the last evening that Davie will spend for

many months at Grey Craigs, for his vessel was loaded, and he must sail before another sun is set. The summer had been and gone, and September was come with its long rich twilights—that month when fields of yellow grain are full of busy workpeople, or when, from the rich black earth, with its fresh odour, the ripe potato harvest is being gathered, and the breeze, as it blows past keen and cool, bears on it a flavour of the salt sea, tempered by the bright autumnal sun which shines unclouded in the blue heavens.

“How is it that after a’, Effie,” asks Jessie Grieve, as she stepped into the smith’s cottage that afternoon, “how hae ye let Davie Gordon past ye? for he is to be married, they say, to Miss Mimie Brown—at least so her friends are telling. I aye said you would drive him away, you were sae saucy to him.”

Lucky it was for Effie that Jessie Grieve was engaged untying her bundle, and she did not notice the deadly pallor that overspread her face; but this was but for a moment; soon her pride coming to her aid she conquered herself, and answered in a firm and seemingly unconcerned voice—

“I thought your auntie had read my fortune different.”

“Weel, I canna understand it,” said her friend; “I never saw her wrang before. An’ to think o’

Davie looking at yon creature wi' her dun-skin an' feathers an' gum-flowers; it's past accountin' for. But I dinna care when you are no mindin'."

"Davie Gordon has a right to please himself," answered Effie steadily; "an' I doubtna but she will make him a gude wife."

"I dinna ken about that, but that's his lookout; yet I canna comprehend how things hae gane wrong between ye, for I am sure he liked you weel ance, there could be little doubt about it, an' if they werna saying it themselves, I wadna believe it possible."

"I aye told you," answered Effie, "that Davie would look higher for a wife than me, and ane wi' siller too, but never mind, Jessie, 'we needna greet o'er spilt milk,' there is as gude fish in the sea as ever came out o't, so we'll not let our hearts be cast down," and Effie looked proudly up and laughed. Ah! Effie, that laugh has tears, bitter tears at its source, but it deceived her friend, who said, rising up—

"I canna laugh at it, Effie, for I think Davie has not used you weel, and I am vexed; still, as I said before, I needna mind when you dinna."

"Dinna mind!" repeated Effie to herself, when Jessie was gone, "dinna mind! O Davie, Davie! surely ye have been cruel. She was stunned and bewildered, for a blow had fallen on her heart, and she found that all which had made life interesting

to her was suddenly gone. It seemed as if a hoar frost had come in summer time and nipped the flowers. All these months past, ever since Gordon's return, she had been living in an enchanted land. That harbour at Grey Craigs, with every rock, and stone, and clump of yellow seaweed; the glen, with its sunny garden and parlour, and every turn on the road to it, had been invested with a charm, because connected with him,—and all this had been suddenly snapped away. There had not been an hour in the day but somehow or other her thoughts had gone out to him, though every moment of her time had been filled more busily than ever, she had not paused to think what she had expected, or if she had expected anything, yet each evening a small adornment, some slight freshness, had been put to her toilet, thinking he will come to-night, and night generally brought him. Oh! these long summer twilights, will they never return to her? they are stereotyped in her memory, when the shadows deepened, and the dews fell on each blade of grass and leaflet, and the town's children laughed and played by their doors where the old people sat and talked of the days of their youth. Nay, even in the very church, when she should only have been thinking of heaven and heavenly things, she had been conscious of one standing by her side, and felt every moment he was there, and now all this was over for ever, still

she would not give in, and she said to herself in a stoical manner, "I can bear it, I will bear it."

She put things straight in the house with a calm eye, but with a heart crushed beneath a load so vast, so mighty, that life seemed to have left it, and then, when all was done, she felt she must have leisure to think, and a place for quietness which she could not have in her room, so she quietly took her bonnet from the shelf, and, locking the door, gave her neighbour the key, and said, as she had a headache she was going for a walk on the rocks. It was an hour full of bracing healthful sunshine. The sky was blue, and the clouds lay on it motionless and entranced. In the Den the trees were arrayed in gold and amber, through which the light streamed, while purple mists, swathing the rainbow tints of the forest, harmonised them with wondrous splendour. But Effie saw nor felt nought of all that beauty, for her heart was weary, and she knew it ever would be, and from henceforth all the freshness of spring, all the beauty of summer, all the richness of autumn, would be for other hearts and eyes than hers. And so she moved on—past the busy life in the harbour, where a schooner or two lay dingy and weatherbeaten; they had been to far away lands on the other side of the ocean, and returned laden with tropical spices and dried skins, whose odour mingled itself with the tarry flavour which had distilled itself everywhere; past the men

rolling up barrels from the ships to the carts waiting for them on the quay ; past the open doors where the fisher lads, with their wide trousers and great sea boots, were cleaning lines heavy with seaweed and tangle, "redding" them, as it is called, and the wives and sisters sitting within were baiting them to be ready for the morrow's use ; away down to the shore with its transparent water, through which was seen shelves of rocks, where purple, lilac, and green mosses unfurled their delicate threads, and thousands of little shell-fish were tranquilly pursuing their quiet life.

And now she was out of sight of the town, and its noise and bustle were no longer heard, while the only sound which fell upon her ear was the low sob and roll of the waves.

To Effie the sea had always had something grave and soothing in its strength and grandeur ; as a gay, light-hearted child, she had played on its rocks, and gathered its shells and seaweed, and woven garlands from the flowers on its sunny braes ; and since she had crossed the threshold of womanhood she had looked on it as a strengthener and consoler, and had often sought it in preference to the company of the light, unthinking, and frivolous crowd ; and thus it was that in the hour of sorrow she fled to it as a child in its distress to the bosom of its mother ; or as the broken-hearted king of Israel, who went into

his chamber over the gate, seeking a place where he might weep undisturbed for the death of his rebellious son. So Effie, in the first bitter grief that had come upon her, sought its grand solitude, stunned by a blow which seemed to have prostrated her spirit.

She climbed up by steps, known only to a few about the town, in the side of a steep rock. This led to a small platform encircled all round by still higher rocks, where one could hide unseen and remain undisturbed, save by the cry of the sea-gull.

There, wrapping her plaid round her, she sat down, and her pent-up grief found vent in a storm of tears, as she remembered bygone days, with a passionate yearning, the memory of which had such a magical sweetness that it only made the present the more bitter; and though she knew that the indulgence of such thoughts was like drinking a poisoned cup, to rebound back on herself in racking pain, she could not help herself. To her memory rushed again touches, tones, looks, now lost to her for ever. And then the future; she must face the long monotonous future, that would make her an old woman when just in the spring of life. Never till now could she have guessed how much her heart had gone out to him who had been the guardian of her helpless childhood. How deep had been her interest in him—truer, more enduring than friendship. She could not tell when it had begun; it seemed to have

grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength. But she knew this—it would cling to her till the last, and never cease but with her fading breath.

Yet, in the midst of her sorrow she felt in a manner soothed, by thinking that He who kept the great waters in the hollow of His hand cared for her, poor weak feeble thing that she was, under His sky, and His help was ready to bind up the wounds from which she bled; and in the midst of her misery she cried, recognising the hand that smote her, “God’s will be done! God’s will be done.”

As Effie sat thus, trying to school herself into resignation to bear meekly the sorrow which none may guess, she heard a step approaching her hiding-place. She thought it would only be some stray fisherman passing near, and she drew the plaid more closely over her head to escape observation.

Nearer and nearer the steps came towards her, and then a voice repeated her name, as one speaks in the crisis of a great emotion—“Effie, Effie, my Effie!” She knew too well the voice that spake, but she could not lift her head. This great joy came upon her as sharply and suddenly as had her sorrow a short time before, and a feeling of faintness stole over her as Davie Gordon seated himself beside her.

"I have come, Effie," he continued, "to see you before I leave. I saw you in the distance, and I thought you would be coming here, so I followed you. I minded how well you liked this place lang syne. And now, Effie, you must promise to be my wife before I go away, and that promise will cheer up my heart over the stormy sea. You mind you said you were my child-wife when you were but a bairn."


But Effie could make no reply, only her head sank lower and lower on her knees. Davie stretched out his hands to her, and said softly, yearningly, "Effie, Effie!" But Effie only wept quietly, glad tears which Davie rightly interpreted, and drew her close to his strong tender heart. And Effie, when she had courage to raise her head, felt and read in that smile, which made soft and lustrous his dark eye, that a love had been given to her such as fell to the lot of few of her sex, but which every true woman feels is a priceless boon—a good man's deep affection, and it made radiant his face with the light of happiness, the one only happiness which gives that light "which never was on sea or shore."

It was a golden afternoon; an autumnal glow hung over them, and the mighty ocean lay around—so still that every little boat was as perfect in each line and motion in the water below as in the air

above; and away behind, the yellow stubble fields, in which the reapers were busy, slanted upwards to the hills. As Davie and Effie sat there, in that wonderful mystical stillness and serenity which glorifies autumn days, there came a hush over life and spirit—a deep rest—a feeling of good and promise in all things, for in their hearts was content. A perfect revelation had brought out the ripeness of strong mutual love, as they sat, and heard, and listened to the old, old story, old as Eden, yet ever new.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Freedom’s battle once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.”—BYRON.

“  O it has come right after a’, Effie,” exclaimed Jessie Grieve, when she heard of her friend’s engagement to Davie Gordon. “ You see my auntie was never wrang in her readin’ o’ cups.”

“ But what about the crosses and tears, Jessie ? ” answered her friend, laughing, “ for ye ken that was part of her prophecy.”

“ I dinna ken that everything comes just as they say,” was the puzzled reply ; “ at least, we’ll hope no. Weel, as Mysie aye says, ‘ Yer ain ’ill no gang past ye,’ so you see it had been ordained that you were to get Davie Gordon, an’ he would hae come to you frae the ends o’ the earth. I wonder,” she added thoughtfully, “ what makes lasses sae anxious to get sweethearts ; they would save theirsels a heap o’ trouble if they would only think o’ that—*their ain ’ill no gang past them.*”

To this piece of philosophy Effie made no reply, she was too much engrossed with her own happiness to speculate on these mysteries.

The next day Davie sailed away for a voyage of a few months, and as Effie watched the ship gliding along with its sails full to the wind and the flag floating from the mast, she could with a thankful heart, while the tear of sorrow was still on her cheek, commend him to the care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and whose love was for him, compared with hers, but like an ocean to a drop; and Davie standing on the deck sees not his comrades cheering and waving their hats on the pier, for his eye is filled with one figure alone—his betrothed, and he uncovered his broad manly brow, and lifted his hand as a parting token with almost the deference and reverence he would have saluted a saint. A new world seemed to have been given to him with the consciousness of that girl's love—a soul noble and strong, which comes to a brave good man, when he feels another life has come to him to keep and protect, and which he will hold to for ever.

At Grey Craigs these partings were everyday things; and Effie, after she had seen the last of her lover's ship disappear below the horizon, returned again quietly to her home duties. She had more work to do now, for she must spin the fine yarn for her providing, as her marriage with Davie was fixed for the

ensuing summer, when he hoped to give up a seafaring life and settle at home. Besides, Uncle John needs him, for he is not so young as he has been, and the Glen is turning out a valuable property, having been discovered to be a rich field of mineral ore: and though the master is still hale and vigorous, the management of the undertaking needs younger and stronger hands to keep matters straight.

It was not Jessie Grieve alone who rejoiced in the engagement of Davie and Effie. To all those most nearly connected with the pair it was a source of great pleasure. The smith had loved the young sailor as a son from the days of his boyhood, and had seen his fine qualities of heart and mind when few besides himself recognised them. Then Uncle John and Mysie had been more interested in Effie than in any of the other village maidens; and though Davie had risen, in the idea of many in the world, above her in rank, they felt that Effie would ennoble any man.

Mr. and Miss Ramsay, also, were not behind in their congratulations; and their esteem Effie valued above all others out of her own immediate circle.

And now, leaving the lovers for a time, we must take a look at the political aspect of the times.

The year 1783, with its tumults and hardships,

had just passed away. Muir, Palmer, and others, leaders of the cause of political freedom, had been tried and condemned for sedition.

From a Government looking upon the movement with fear and suspicion they received no justice or mercy, being classed amongst the turbulent and discontented who wished to overthrow kings and constitutions, and fill the land with bloodshed and strife; whereas many of them were grand and noble men, with minds further advanced and more enlightened than the most of their age and time, advocating principles and rights which we in our days fully enjoy, and would feel sorely aggrieved if any attempt were made to deprive us of them.

Muir, a young, rising advocate of the Scottish bar, was perhaps one of the cleverest and most honourable of the band, and he could say in his own defence what his enemies could not gainsay. We quote part of his speech at his trial:—

“All that malice could devise, all that slander could circulate, has been directed against me. I speak with joy and with triumph—after an investigation into my public transactions and into my private conduct, the most minute and the most unexampled which ever occurred in this country—that my moral character stands secure and unimpeached. With the anonymous, the worthless, and the paid assassins of public reputation, I disdained to enter the lists. To

this day I looked forward with expectation when, before you, in the presence of Scotland, I should not merely remove the suspicion of guilt, but should demonstrate my innocence. I will not imitate the example of the public prosecutor, who has finished his pleadings. Sounding and unsubstantial declamation is unsuitable for you, and it is unworthy of me. This is not an hour to temporise. The eyes of this country are fixed upon us both. The records of this trial will pass down to posterity. When our ashes shall be scattered by the winds of heaven, the impartial voice of the future times will rejudge our conduct. Let faction rage; let the spirit of party in the present hour proudly domineer—the illusion will soon vanish away. In solitude the power of recollection will assume its influence, and then it will be material to you whether or not you have acted uprightly, or sinned against your own conscience in my acquittal or in my condemnation.”

He brought a long and brilliant speech to a close in these words:—“This is now perhaps the last time that I shall address my country. I have explained the tenor of my past life. Nothing shall tear from me the record of my departed days. The enemies of reform have scrutinised, in a manner hitherto unexampled in Scotland, every action I may have performed, every word I may have uttered. Of crimes most foul and horrible have I been accused—of

attempting to raise the standard of civil war and to plunge this land in blood, and to cover it with desolation. At every step, as the evidence of the Crown advanced, my innocence has brightened. So far from influencing the minds of men to sedition and outrage, all the witnesses have concurred that my only anxiety was to impress upon them the necessity of peace, of good order, and of good morals. What, then, has been my crime? Not the lending to a relation the copy of Mr. Paine's works; not the giving away to another a few numbers of an innocent and constitutional publication; but for having dared to be—according to the measure of my feeble abilities—a strenuous and active advocate for any equal representation of the people in the House of the people; for having dared to attempt to accomplish a measure by legal means which was to diminish the weight of their taxes and to put an end to the profusion of their blood. From my childhood to this moment I have devoted myself to the cause of the people. It is a good cause. It shall ultimately prevail. It shall finally triumph. Say these openly in your verdict, if you do condemn me, that it is for my attachment to this cause alone, and not for those vain and wretched pretexts stated in the indictment, intended only to colour and disguise the real motives of my asseverations.

“The time will come when men must stand or fall

by their actions, when all human pageantry shall cease, when the hearts of all shall be laid open. If you regard your most important interests, if you wish that your conscience should whisper to you words of consolation, or speak to you in the terrible language of remorse, weigh well the verdict you are to pronounce. As for me, I am careless and indifferent to my fate. I can look danger and I can look death in the face, for I am shielded by the consciousness of my own rectitude. I may be condemned to languish in the recesses of a dungeon, I may be doomed to ascend the scaffold; nothing can deprive me of the recollection of the past, nothing can destroy my inward peace of mind arising from the remembrance of having discharged my duty."

These words, honest and temperate as they were, availed him nothing; for a jury composed of the friends of Government found him guilty, and he was sentenced to transportation.

With men such as Muir, Mr. Ramsay sympathised deeply and truly in heart. But it had become dangerous to make his views known, or express his sentiments openly; therefore he came less into contact with friends who differed from him, and devoted himself with greater assiduity to intellectual pursuits more congenial to his retiring nature than the dissensions of parties or the strife of politics, and thus, though his views were well known, he was so respected that

he was let alone, and the storm passed over without touching him.

On the other hand, the Tories were getting to be firmer supporters of Government, and justified out and out its proceedings in these trials.

At the same time bitterness and divisions were becoming fiercer and more frequent amongst the Dissenters at Grey Craigs, caused by the old vexed question of signing the declaration, so politics in Church and State were occupying more and more the minds of the people, and hearts were being torn and lacerated by the horrors of the pressgang, which hung like a black cloud over the fishing towns and villages, to snatch away its best and bravest to the war.

The only one who improved in the midst of all this strife was Alec Grieve, the weaver. Perhaps intimidated by the severe measures brought to bear against those holding opinions which had been far less culpable than his had been, but more especially having had time and opportunity from a sick bed to review his past life, he rose up a better and a wiser man than he had lain down, and forsook at once and for ever his idle ways and companions. Again the busy sound of the loom might be heard in his house, and his wife soon regained her happy look, while his children, clothed and fed, went to school and church with their respectable neighbours.

CHAPTER XIX.

" These old, worn leaves in History's book,
How faded, crumpled, and torn they look !
We scarce can read them, for, blurred with tears,
They bear us the record of troubles and fears ;
But they speak, too, of deeds by our fathers bold
In those stirring times, the times of old."

—ANON.



THE old library at Briary Park seemed little changed though years had passed since the day we first saw it, when Mrs. Harvey and Arthur left it for the walk to the smith's cottage.

It is true, the slim-legged spinnet had been removed, and in its place stood a modern harpsichord, while the heavy cushioned chairs had given place to those of a lighter make and material. But the old family pictures still frowned gloomy and silent from the dark polished walls, and the heavy oak book-case bore its load of calf-bound folios.

A cheerful fire burned in the grate, and threw a ruddy glow on the Indian jars, screens, couches, and easy-chairs that were scattered up and down the room.

But there had been greater changes still in the old room, for Mrs. Harvey's chair was empty and her place vacant, while another coffin had been added to those already occupying the vault in that ivy-crowned church, gray with the shadows of some hundred years—the vault which contained the remains of a family who, though ennobled by no title, belonged to that proud class of Scottish landholders to whom a peerage would be no distinction.

Mrs. Harvey had died before the return of her son and his family from India. As she advanced in years her character mellowed and ripened, and those who attended her in her last moments could scarcely have recognised in the meek and lowly disciple of the cross, the once proud and dignified lady of Briary Park. She had learnt that all on earth was vanity, —that in the eyes of the great and mighty Ruler of the universe one creature that He had made was as good as another, for she was passing on to a land where there is no distinction of persons or rank, except the distinction of being more humble, more Christ-like. The saying of the smith's, that there "maun aye be a something," had been the first thing which had awakened her to the power and mightiness of God. It was the little leaven that soon penetrated through the whole mind and heart until all was leavened; and so when she died, the poor felt that

in her they had lost a friend whose place could not easily be supplied.

Lady Anne Harvey had all her mother-in-law's stateliness of demeanour without her kindness and consideration; and as she moved through the room amongst her guests, or gave her orders to the servants, one could see at a glance from whom her son Arthur derived that haughty, supercilious look which his face wore even in boyhood, and which was now stamped indelibly upon it since he had grown up to man's estate.

The room that night was full of company, and a brilliant stream of conversation was carried on amongst the different groups that filled it.

Colonel Harvey was playing a rubber of whist with a few old veterans, to whom during dinner he had denounced the Radicals about Grey Craigs as the most dangerous of wild creatures, Dissenters alone excepted; indeed, in his mind, the two were classed together as being enemies to the State, for whom hanging was too good, and the Colonel thought the lives of honest men were not safe as long as they were permitted to be in the land.

At the other end of the apartment Arthur was talking and laughing with some young men like himself, of whose blood and training there could be little doubt, and from the livery they wore, it was seen that they belonged to the little vessel, a king's

boat, lying in the Roads, the object of jealousy and suspicion to the poor sailors and their households.

A group of girls were seated in one of the deep windows, one working embroidery, the others engaged in different ways, some talking, and one or two turning over the leaves of old song-books. The air was heavy with the fragrance of strongly-scented flowers, which sent out their night odours from a conservatory at the end of the room.

"Come here, Lilian," said Janet Harvey, who was seated at the embroidery-frame; "come and see the progress I have made since morning."

Lilian Arbuthnot, who was thus called, was a pale, interesting-looking girl, who had been sitting apart from the others, leaning her head on her hand, seemingly heedless of what was taking place around her. She was young, only eighteen, and one could have expected to see on her face the happy, free look of girlhood, which had no tale of the past to tell, and expectant of all things fair and promising in the future; but instead of this there was a sad, careworn expression, as if sorrow had come to her early, and made her old and thoughtful before her time. She started when Janet called upon her, then rising, she asked, in low, soft tones that had in them an undercurrent of sorrow—

"Do you wish me, Janet, dear? What can I do for you?"

"Only to note the progress I have been making. See, this bunch of roses is finished, and I have added a flower to that group of convolvulus. It must be ready by Whitsuntide; I wish it for your bridal gift."

Lilian heaved a deep sigh and a slight tremor passed over her frame, but Janet was too intent on her work to observe the effect of her words on her friend.

Lilian stood for a little looking on, and then she said, "How kind of you to toil in this way for me!"

"But is there not a pleasure in toiling for those we love, if you call it toil," answered Alice Harvey, the youngest and best-beloved daughter, who at this moment joined her sister and friend by the embroidery frame. Then putting her arm through that of Lilian, she said, "Come, dear Lilian, and sing us the song you used to sing last year, 'The Yellow-haired Laddie.' I am longing to hear it again, and these young men over there" (pointing with her finger to her brother and his companions) "will be delighted with it."

"Not to-night, Alice," whispered Lilian in a tone of distress. "Please, do not ask me; somehow I don't feel equal to it."

"And why not?" persisted the girl. "You used to sing it so nicely at Riverston—do you remember?—when William Oliphant and his sisters were there."

I will get Arthur to coax you; you cannot refuse him."

"I cannot, indeed; I cannot sing to-night," answered Lilian with such a look of sadness that Alice forbore to press her, and said kindly—

"I see you are still suffering from headache, so I will sing for you, for I have led these young men to expect a song." And so saying, she tripped to the harpsichord, and sang the song of Allan Ramsay, which was then a favourite in Scotland, but is now almost forgotten, though the air is one of the finest of our country.

"The yellow-haired laddie sat down on yon brae,
Crying, 'Milk the ewes, lassie; let nane o' them gae ;'
And aye as she milked, and aye as she sang,
'The yellow-haired laddie shall be my gudeman.

" 'The weather is cauld, and my cleadin' is thin,
The ewes are new clept, and they winna bucht in ;
They winna bucht in, although I should dee—
O yellow-haired laddie, be kind unto me.'

"The gudewife cries but the house, 'Jenny, come ben ;
The cheese is to mak' and the butter to kirn.'
'Though butter and cheese and a' should gang sour,
I'll crack and I'll kiss wi' my love this half-hour—
It's ae lang half-hour, and we'll e'en mak' it three,
For the yellow-haired laddie my gudeman shall be.' "

"Well done, my little Alice," said Arthur, laughing.
"You are a determined little lady, and will marry
I see, in spite of all, 'your yellow-haired laddie.'

But who is he, my sister, and where does he come from ? ”

To which question Alice answered gaily, by singing two lines of another song—

“ He’s coming frae the north that’s to fancy me,
He’s coming frae the north that’s to fancy me ;
He’s a feather in his bonnet and a ribbon at his knee,
He’s a bonnie highland laddie that’s to fancy me.”

“ Well, well, whoever he is,” said her brother, laughing, “ he’ll need to be a good man to be worthy of my sister. But tell me,” he continued, “ where was my little Mercurian flying to-day when I met her on the road ; not going to foregather, I hope, with her ‘ yellow-haired laddie ? ’ ”

“ No, no ; ” was the reply of Alice, pinching at the same time her brother’s ear, “ it was only to the cottage of Grieve, the weaver ; I was going to ask for Jessie, and take her a small gift ; she is to be married to-morrow to her old lover Charlie Morrison. He has been such a good faithful man, and has waited for her ever so long, but Jessie never would marry him, for she had to help her family with her earnings.”

“ Upon my word, Alice, this is perfectly intolerable,” interposed her sister Janet, “ I wonder what mamma would say if she knew the company you take up with, and you seem to be the repository

of all the secrets of these people; you have little pride!"

"I thought pride was a thing forbidden in the Bible, Janet," retorted Alice saucily.

"Now, Janet, don't be hard upon the child," said Arthur, drawing Alice near him; and as he patted her sleek brown hair caressingly, he asked, "Well, are there any more marriages, or any more news from Grey Craigs, Alice?"

"Only Effie Martin's to marry David Gordon, but that is not to be until summer. I saw him the other day; what a fine-looking young man he is; he is at home just now for a few weeks." As she spoke these words, something of a shadow clouded Arthur's face, but he answered cheerily—

"Well, you have a numerous acquaintance in the town, Alice, and speak of all these folks as if you knew them intimately."

"So I do," was the laughing reply, "for Jessie Grieve sometimes makes my dresses, and Effie Martin is her friend; and Effie is so good and so pretty, I don't think there are many ladies to equal her."

"I told you, you spoiled her, Arthur," exclaimed Janet; "now you can judge for yourself; fancy, the child knows all those low, vulgar people."

"And you should judge for yourself, Janet," retorted Alice, "and then you would see that these

people are neither low nor vulgar ;” and so saying, she walked off, and as Janet followed, Arthur was left with his betrothed bride.

There was one watching the expression of Lilian’s face, and her unhappy, constrained manner, when Arthur bent down to whisper some lover-like words in her ear. She saw how indifferently she received them, and how thankful she seemed to be when he left her again for the more congenial company of his friends, who were still chatting and laughing at the other end of the large room. The one who was watching Lilian so closely was her elder half-sister Margaret.

Margaret was a daughter of her father’s by a former marriage. She was a fine-looking young woman, but had a hard and disagreeable expression of face ; besides, she was jealous of Lilian, who not only was the favourite of every one, but, through her mother, was an heiress to boot ; over and above, Lilian, little as she prized it, was the destined bride of Arthur Harvey, the only man in the world that Margaret Arbuthnot had loved. Before Lilian had come from school, Margaret had been the choice of Arthur, at any rate for flirtation, as it could be no deeper on his part, while she had really loved him ; and if that love had still been hers, it might have softened her, and made her a better woman ; instead of this she was jealous and exasperated with her

sister, who had got, and cared nothing for, what was to her so precious.

When Arthur had left Lilian, Margaret rose from her seat, and coming close to her sister, said tauntingly, "I would say a penny for your thoughts, Lilian, could I not guess them, and I know, though the others could not, why you would not sing to-night. Headache, forsooth! I wonder Arthur has not long ago discovered your indifference to him and given you up."

"Oh! that it could be even so!" cried the poor girl, with such a look of agony on her face that it might have moved a heart of stone. It touched not, however, the heart of her sister—for "jealousy is cruel as the grave,"—who continued in the same tones—

"I have only to breathe into my father's ear the reason why you wish to be quit of your engagement with Harvey, and William Oliphant may bid farewell to Glen o' Kirk."

"You will not surely be so cruel, Margaret!" cried Lilian imploringly; "it was my fault, mine alone, and let me be the sufferer. I can bear anything if he is happy, and, O Margaret! remember his mother and sisters, who are dependent on him. Do not betray us, and I'll marry Arthur if it saves William from harm." Adding fondly and sadly, "Poor William, he may be sorry for a little, but

amidst the duties of a busy life he will soon forget me."

"Hush, then, you foolish girl!" said her sister, "and I will keep your secret; but go and wash your eyes in case you should be observed, and the reason of the grief inquired into," for Lilian by this time was quietly weeping; and so saying, Margaret turned away to join the others, while Lilian rose softly and stole from the room.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Oh, but man, proud man !
Drest in a little brief authority,
Like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.” —SHAKESPEARE.



IN the servants hall at Briary Park, Mrs. Nelson the housekeeper and Reuben the butler were chatting over the events of the day.

“ Come,” said Mrs. Nelson at last, “ to my room, and take a bit of supper with me,” for she felt it was dangerous for them to speak before the servants moving to and fro.

“ Well, I daresay my duties are over for a time,” answered the butler, “ so I may come and chat a while.”

It was a comfortable room, the one Mrs. Nelson called her own in Briary Park. The fire burnt cheerfully on the hearth, and sent fitful gleams into the gloomy corners; on the table a lamp also shed a bright light, enabling the busy housekeeper to arrange her accounts, with which she had been occupied before

she had gone into the hall to look after some business. Reuben drew near the table on which Mrs. Nelson put down the bread and cheese and a tankard of home-brewed ale, and while taking their supper, they sat and discoursed on many topics of mutual interest.

"I was at Grey Craigs this forenoon," remarked the butler, "and I hear there's great fear among the young seamen about the cutter lying in the Roads: they ken it's a king's boat, an' though she is quiet just now, mischief may be brewing. They can hardly think that Mr. Arthur would encourage the officers about him if they meant harm to the puir lads he has been brought up amongst, but, to tell you the truth, I have had my ain doubts o' him, he has little heart, or I'm much mistaken, and muckle pride. His grandmother tried hard to train him up weel, but ye see, Mrs. Nelson, 'what's bred in the bone, ye canna drive out o' the flesh,' an' I dinna like these young fellows, his companions; very bland and complaisant they are, but there's an air about them that I mistrust. There was a whispering round the door when they left a while since, and a look on their faces as if they were planning some deed of darkness or other. I wish I could hae found them out, and warned the fisher lads, if it's them they are intending evil to."

"Ye don't mean to say," answered Mrs. Nelson,

shuddering, "that ye are frightened they carry off the lads. It's a cruel thing the pressgang," added Mrs. Nelson. "I have a young nephew a sailor, my brother's son, Ray Blanchard. I sometimes think if he were pressed, it would break his father and mother's hearts."

"It's a shame and disgrace to the country, an' many sorrowful hearts it has caused, an' much misery. Speak against Radicals, I'm a Radical myself, if getting these abominations rectified prove one a Radical. I hae seen much misery frae that rascally pressgang. I had a favourite sister, she was a gentle delicate thing, an' her lover was a sailor. The king's men were after him to take him off to the wars, and my mother and she kept him hidden for some days in our garret, but a' wadna dae, he was ower likely a man to escape them, an' so they hunted him down an' took him out o' the house before their very een, and struck my puir sister when she put her arms round to try and save him. Nelly never had a day to do well after this, and she used to sit and sing waesome sangs about the sea until our hearts were sad; and when she heard o' his death in the war some years after, she never looked up again, but just dwined and dwined, and at last she died o' fair heart-sickness. Aye, an' mony mair I hae seen smitten that way, besides puir Nelly. It makes my blood freeze when I mind o' the sorrowful scenes I hae witnessed. I

hae seen men coming sailing in frae far-away parts, happy and cheerie, thinking o' their hames, seized before they could reach them—in the very sight of their wives, sweethearts, and bairns, and torn off without being able to speak a word o' comfort and encouragement to the sair hearts they were leaving behind. What wi' shipwrecks, battles, and foreign prisons, few ever come back."

"Woes me," said Mrs. Nelson sadly, "how long will God allow such despotism and cruelty to prevail in the land?"

"We canna tell, nor can we question the dealings o' the Almighty."

"And do you think," inquired Mrs. Nelson, "that Mr. Arthur would harbour friends here that would seize on the sailors of his own town?"

"I canna answer for him," was the reply, "I never thought much of him, an' I pity the young thing that's to marry him, for oh! Mrs. Nelson, she wants the blythe look on her face we would expect ane to hae in sic circumstances. I hae my ain doubts if she cares for him; it was only the night she passed me in the lobby, and I could see tears on her cheeks, and yet he's a likely lad to take a lassie's e'e."

"Ah! Reuben," exclaimed Mrs. Nelson, laughing, "an old bachelor like you is not learned in women's hearts. It is not the fairest face that takes the

fancy, and the face is aye the fairest we love the best; if all tales are true, there is one whose little finger is dearer to Miss Lilian than all Mr. Arthur's body—and his lands into the bargain."

"Weel, you women folk beat a' for hearing thae kind o' things," replied Reuben; "and if there's a love-story ye'll ferret it out; but what's the cross there, for true love is aye crossed, they say."

"Money, Reuben, money, the root of all evil!" retorted his friend. "The minister's son is poor, and the laird's son is rich, and the properties lie unto each other; but it's hardly safe to speak of these things."

"Quite safe with me," was the answer, "and where I may say it, I dinna think Mr. Arthur would care whether he has her love or no, if he gets her broad acres."

"The more's the pity for the poor young lady," said Mrs. Nelson, "for it needs all the love of the heart to make marriage happy, and enable the couple to bear one another's burdens. Well, if we did not know there was one reigning in the heavens, we would lose faith altogether, so strange are the things happening around us; and she is such a gentle, kindly girl, too, one would have thought everybody would have loved her. The family here seem all to do so, but her sister, Reuben, I don't fancy her; I only wish she and not Miss Lilian had been Mr. Arthur's

choice. And so she was once, but then Miss Lilian had the money, which Mr. Arthur prizes (you see it was through Miss Lilian's mother the money came). Miss Arbuthnot hates Miss Lilian, they say, not only because she has money, but because of Mr. Arthur; and if she did not think (so it is said) that they would be unhappy if they were married, she would put her foot through it. The way I know all this is that, before I came here, I was house-keeper with a friend of the Arbuthnots, and Miss Lilian often comes here to have a chat with me about old times. But what makes you think Mr. Arthur does not care for Miss Lilian? We quite understand why she does not care for him."

"For much the same reason," answered Reuben. "You have na been sae lang amongst us, to ken our stories weel. Mr. Arthur would fain have made up to Effie Martin, the smith's daughter at Grey Craigs, the bonniest lassie in a' thae parts; but Effie had been ower weel trained by her father, honest man, to take up wi' him; she wad ken little gude would come o't. Besides, she liked another. However, I do believe Mr. Arthur had a wark wi' Effie, as much as his selfish nature would let him."

"Effie Martin is going to be married soon to young Gordon, they say," was Mrs. Nelson's remark. "Well, he is a more suitable match for her than

Mr. Arthur, though even he is too far above her in rank."

"Aye, but they kent each other since they were bairns," said the butler; and then he told Mrs. Nelson the story of Mrs. Martin's death, and the care the boy took of the infant.

After some further talk the two friends separated for the night, but it was long before sleep visited Mrs. Nelson's pillow; and when she did sleep it was to dream fearful dreams which the conversation of Reuben had suggested; and always in these dreams were mingled thoughts of her brother's son, of whom for years she had lost all trace, but whom she had known and loved dearly as a child.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ The bride she was baith young and fair,
Her neck outshone her features rare ;
A satin snood bound up her hair,
And flowers amang her breast-knots.

“ The bridegroom gazed, but mair I ween
He prized the glance o’ love’s saft een,
That made him proud o’ his sweet Jean
When she put on her breast-knots.”



THE Dissenting manse at Grey Craigs was a plain two-storied building, overshadowed by a few large trees which separated it from the primitive-looking meeting-house at its side. A close-clipped yew hedge surrounded the garden in front of the house, in which was seen a promise of floweriness when spring winds should blow over the frost-hardened earth ; for already, through the partially softened soil, the green spikes of the crocus were shooting up in thick tufts, and the pale snow-drop was lifting its head in the sunshine.

The window of the little parlour in which the minister, his wife, and their only child, a boy of about five years old, were seated, overlooked the .

harbour and the shining sea to the coast beyond, and when the storm raged loud and fierce, as it often did on that rock-bound coast, the dash of the waves was heard mingling with the sough and shriek of the wind as it tossed the branches of the trees which surrounded the house. The furniture of the room, though plain, had an air of comfort and neatness such as only a clever, practical housekeeper could give it. Old-fashioned chintz curtains festooned the window, while a polished mahogany table occupied the middle of the floor, at which the family sat that morning partaking of their substantial breakfast. A fire—a necessary comfort on a clear, frosty morning—burned in the grate, and brightened with its warm light everything its flame touched. Over the mantel-shelf hung a picture of “The Highland Chieftain and his Bride,” the work of the minister’s wife when a school-girl, and it was still preserved, not from any merit in the piece, for the tartan dresses had lost their brightness, and the different shades of silk composing the foliage of the trees above their heads had become faded and soiled; but then Isabel Leslie worked it at Miss Seton’s boarding-school, sitting in her prim, high-backed chair amongst many young friends whose merry laugh was now silenced in the grave, and therefore she loved this memorial of the past:

That Mrs. Campbell was a good housekeeper, there was no mistake, for everything on the table was neat,

and the food cooked to a nicety. These warm scones, she was up in the morning and baked them for breakfast when the rest of the household were asleep; and that golden butter, she brought it herself from the dairy-farm among the hills when she went with the minister to pay his last ministerial visit. To her might indeed be applied the words of Solomon when he described a notable housewife:—

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her

husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

Well was it for the poor Dissenting minister of Grey Craigs that Isabel Leslie left her father and mother, and merry household of young brothers and sisters, aye, and many lovers, to settle down in that quiet manse, and devote herself actively to her husband and his work. It was only a few years since she came to Grey Craigs, and yet she had made the plain house so snug and comfortable, and flowery too, that in summer it appeared like a sylvan bower; while by prudent management of his income of one hundred a year, with the small addition of her own money, she had been able to cover all expenses and make ends meet. And yet there was no meanness,

no niggardliness, for often a pot of jelly found its way to some poor labourer's cottage to cure a cold, or a warm flannel petticoat made by her active hands helped to keep a widow in the congregation free from rheumatism.

She was a handsome, fair woman of five and thirty, genial and frank, while James Campbell was a little, spare man, tough and staunch, though sometimes violent and dogmatical, and having small patience with the double-dealing and time-serving spirits around. On the other hand, he was true to his principles, and valiant in the cause of truth, while his character for sterling honesty and uprightness was never gainsayed even by those who felt the force of his sarcasm and suffered from his censure and reproof. Then he was kind-hearted and sympathising, so much so that all looked up to him as a friend, and his people would sometimes laugh and say of him, "Our minister's bark is waur than his bite."

As Mr. Campbell put on his great overcoat that morning, his wife, while she brought his hat and gloves, reminded him that this was Jessie Grieve's marriage day, and urged him to be home in time from the meeting in a neighbouring town whither he was going, assuring him that she would have everything in readiness for the party.

The people at Grey Craigs in those days adhered to the old-fashioned custom of waiting upon the

minister at his manse when there was a marriage ceremony to be performed. Thus saving the good man the trouble of coming to them; and on these occasions the kitchen was in general the reception-room, being often the largest place in the house.

The morning had been clear and frosty at Grey Craigs, and everything around was clothed in a magnificent dress of frosted silver, gorgeous as the handicraft of a cunning jeweller, the glittering rime transfiguring flowers and weeds into a fret-work of beauty; the burn side was a fringe of jewels, and as the unfettered current sped on its way it shed right and left sparkling gems, which clustered from each spray, or hung like shimmering lances from every twig and leaf in its path. The Den was, around and underneath, a piece of rare magnificence with its "dead men's fingers," or pendant icicles hanging from rock and tree, while thorn and spray stood stiff in crystal armour, and overhead was the blue of the sapphire sky.

Ever and anon there was heard in the stillness which reigned around the winter music of the woods, the wind, sweeping in gusts through the leafless trees, loosening the icicles from the branches to send them shattered to the ground, or, swaying them gently against each other, making tiny rustlings of faint sounds like the echoes of fairy bells.

The voices of the children were unheard in the wind-

ing lanes, and the silence was seldom broken, save it might be by a hoarse croak of a raven, or the dull creaking of the carrier's cart as it moved along the icebound road, with the dog walking leisurely along below, availing itself of the scant shelter it afforded. The frost that had bound the earth in its fetters had stopped in a measure the labour of man. The plough stood frozen in the furrow, and the boat was drawn up upon the shore, while the fishermen lingered by their doors, or strolled idly about the town, waiting for a fresh breeze before their nets again swept over the deep. Swiftly and unmarked the day passed away, and as Davie Gordon with a friend, a young English sailor, was to be of the wedding party, the former left his friend to accompany Uncle John, and went with Effie to the cottage of the bride. As the lovers strolled leisurely along, the light of the afternoon shortened, and the darkness shutting in gradually the pale streaks of sky in the west, brought out more and more distinctly the white sea-birds sitting on the shelves of the rock, growing dimmer in the dusky twilight.

There was something calm and almost heavenly in the white earth all around them, and as Effie looked on it she thought somehow of the shining white robes with which those who have passed through much tribulation shall one day be clothed. It seemed a strange thought to obtrude itself at such

a time, and yet again and again it came into her mind, as they walked on in happy silence, and she kept thinking these words, "They shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy."

When they reached the harbour, the moon, streaming out brightly from under a cloud, fell on the cutter lying peacefully in the Roads, its sails flapping idly against the mast, as she rose and sank in the swell. With the sight of it, somehow, a dread idea of danger rose up before the girl, which made her exclaim with a shiver, as she clasped more closely the arm of her betrothed, "O Davie, I'm feared when I look at that thing lying there like a bird of ill omen; is there no danger for you, think you, in that cutter and its crew, what would I do, Davie, if you were ta'en away to these foreign wars?"

"Dinna be feared, Effie," answered her lover cheerfully, "we'll get warning in time to flee. We have spies around to tell us whenever she shows her teeth. They've given no signs o' ill to us yet, and Captain Harvey will not bring lads about him that will harm his town's folk."

"O Davie!" she replied anxiously, "dinna trust Harvey, he bears a grudge at baith you and me. Do ye no mind yon day in the Glen, he said he would make us rue what we had dune; I canna tell, but my heart sickens when I look at that boat; an' what for are they lyin' sae lang idle here."



"O Davie! I'm feared when I look at that thing lying there."—Page 198.

"They sail to-morrow, it seems," was the answer, "they've been waiting for orders from headquarters."

"Well, it will be a welcome sight when they leave," said the girl, "for I cannot help being concerned about you, and wishing you were safe away to sea again; the dangers o' it seem little now compared wi' the cruelty o' man on land."

"Ye didna use to be nervous, Effie," answered Davie tenderly; "even when ye were a wee thing, and I carried ye on my shoulders down to the shore in a storm, ye just laughed at the waves, and would hae gaen into boats, or owre the rocks, if I would hae let you."

"I had naething sae precious to lose then. O Davie! it would break my heart if ye were pressed!"

"We maun trust to a higher arm than man's," said Davie hopefully, "an' now, when we are going to a merry meeting, Effie, ye must cheer up, or else ye'll make me dowie as well as yourself."

By this time they had drawn near the part of the town—"the weaver's row"—where the bride lived, and every little window had its light shining cheerily in it, like as many glow-worms.

The cottage of Grieve was a low thatched dwelling, on the roof of which mosses grew in all their beauty, with the not-to-be-forgotten "fouat" or house leek—the charm against fire amongst Scottish poor, as

the horse-shoe over the door was to them an antidote against witchcraft.

Inside the house things wore a more comfortable look than they did when Effie had visited it some time before; the weaver had been working steadily at his loom, and bringing in money regularly for the support of his wife and children; and so, when things had begun to improve, Jessie saw no hindrance to her marriage with her old lover Charlie.

The room where the company were assembled had a boarded floor very clean and white, brightened here and there with patches of golden sand where the firelight glanced into all the corners; the bed had a patchwork quilt and curtains of blue and white linen; and a "wag-at-the-wa'" pointed to the hour. The homely furniture had been bought back, bit by bit, so that things looked snug and comfortable for the guests, who had pretty well assembled before Davie and Effie arrived. Among these guests were many of the friends we have been already made acquainted with, Mr. and Miss Ramsay, the smith and Uncle John, and Davie's friend, a fine dashing young sailor, the ship's carpenter; an Englishman to whom Davie had once rendered a favour, and who ever since had loved him as a brother.

When the guests were all assembled they began to form a procession to walk to the manse, where the

ceremony was to be performed. As Effie was bridesmaid, Davie reluctantly gave her up to the care of the groomsman, taking himself the arm of his English friend, while she with her partner followed immediately in the rear of the bride and bridegroom. Bringing up the procession was the wooden-legged fiddler, Will Kemp, playing in his best style, "Fy, let us a' to the wedding," the fiddler was a necessary accompaniment of these occasions, and that tune, varied by "Hey, the bonny breast-knots," was the one invariably played.

When they arrived at the manse they found all things ready for their reception, and Mr. and Mrs. Campbell at hand to receive them and give them a word of welcome and congratulation. Soon after, Mr. Campbell proceeded with the business which had brought them together, and after an address and prayer it was ended. Then followed hand-shaking, kissing, and many good wishes for the health and happiness of the newly-married pair, after which the procession formed again, and took the road to the inn-barn, set in order for the occasion,—Will Kemp, as before, bringing up the rear, and fiddling while he stumped along; but this time it was the air of "Woo'd and married an' a'."

When the party were assembled in the barn the first part of the evening's programme consisted of supper, which was spread out on two long tables;

it was composed of abundance of wheaten bread, barley scones, oaten cakes, mutton and beef ham, cheese, and a large fruit pie, containing ring, sixpence, and thimble. For the two first of these symbols the young people were most eager—the ring foretelling early marriage, and the sixpence riches, while the last, the thimble, was avoided, the finder of it trying to conceal the fact, because it betokened a life of single blessedness.

The minister, who had accompanied the party from the manse, having pronounced a short blessing on the supper, soon nothing was heard but a clatter of spoons and knives, showing that the company were doing ample justice to the good and plentiful cheer.

When they were fully satisfied, and the tables cleared away, the young people began to wish that Mr. Campbell would leave, for they knew he would object to the manner in which they intended to close their proceedings, *i.e.*, by dancing. That art was held by the strict Dissenters in these times to be unlawful, and some who indulged in it were denied church privileges. Mr. Campbell, though he would not have carried things so far, still highly disapproved, and he was not a man to shrink from speaking his mind plainly; though they did not tell him their intentions, he guessed as much, and he reproved the smith and Uncle John for countenancing such a thing.

"The young folks never asked our leave," said the douce smith, "an' now the best we think we can do is to stay and brew the toddy, and see that all go away in gude time."

But with this reasoning the minister did not agree. He said "it was only half measures, just like Naaman the Syrian taking the two mules' burdens of earth from the land of Israel to kneel on it in the idol temple."

In the meantime some of the young men present had been urging Will Kemp to enter the list and argue with the minister, prompting him at the same time what to say. Will was rather unwilling to be thus brought forward, but as he had just been bragging that "he wadna gie a pin for the opinion o' a' the kirk session or the hale o' the ministers," he could not for shame show the white feather.

"Ask him, Will," whispered one of the lads, "if Solomon did not countenance dancing when he said, 'There was a time to dance.'"

Will accordingly put the question, to which the minister replied—

"I believe Solomon meant by that, that there was a time to worship God in the dance, for dancing was a religious service amongst the Jews, so we have David dancing before the ark; true," he added, "there was yet another kind of dancing mentioned in the Bible, and that was when Job said of the

wicked, 'Their children dance;' then we have the daughter of Herodias dancing before Herod, and the murder of John the Baptist following, no great encouragement, I would think, in this," continued Mr. Campbell, "for such a thing as you propose to engage in to-night."

Will, who had been again prompted how to reply by a wag of the place, said, "But ye mind, minister, what a service dancing once did to the nearly extinct tribe of Benjamin; it got them wives."

"Will, Will," replied the minister, "I doubt ye turn your knowledge of the Scriptures to a bad use." He then said, "I wonder if ye ever read of Demetrius the silversmith in the Acts of the Apostles, how he defended a bad cause—the making of shrines for an idol's temple, because that work brought no small gain to him and others."

"Ah, Mr. Campbell," cried Will, "ye hae me there; I gie it up for a bad job to argue wi' you. Deed I never wad hae tried it but for thae lads there that durstna speak to you theirsels; an' I maun confess I couldna live without dancing, ye see I hae nae other ways o' getting my bread but by fiddling, being a lamiter."

"Well, Will, you began quoting Scripture to me, so you cannot complain if I take you up on your own ground. I would remind you, in answer to that argument, the man of God said to the king of Judah

when he was unwilling to give up what he had been commanded, and asked, 'But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?' and he was told in reply, 'The Lord is able to give you much more than this.' Now, I say, trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding, and He will open up the way for you to win your bread in a more honest manner."

To this Will could only answer while he scratched his head, "You're ower mony for me in the handling o' Scripture; I'm beat on a' hands."

Mr. Campbell then turned to the company and said, "Friends, these are solemn times in which we live, and God's judgments are abroad on the earth, see that ye join trembling with your mirth. I wash my hands of the matter, for I have not failed to warn you; and I can only pray God that lamentation, mourning, and woe may not follow the levity of this night." So saying, the minister lifted his hat, and after shaking hands with some of the elder men, left the barn.

"I wish," said Uncle John, shrugging his shoulders, when the minister had gone, "I wish we had had naething to do wi' this business, I dinna like Mr. Campbell to be vexed; though I think the young folk might be worse employed."

"We canna make a better o't now," answered

Grieve, "they must hae their dance when it has gane sae far; but we will try and stop it in time."

The young people, however, were not disturbed by the minister's words, indeed few of them had heard them, as he had principally addressed the older members of the party, and so they made haste to prepare the barn for the festivities.

It had been decorated with evergreens, which partly hid its old walls and dirty rafters, and it was lighted in a primitive fashion by candles placed in scooped-out turnips, which were regularly snuffed by the finger and thumb of some one or other of the company.

The bride led off the first dance with the groomsmen, and very pretty she looked in her white dress, her hair bound up with blue ribbon; very happy she was too, and at that moment had forgotten all her long weary waiting and the trials she had passed through. The bridegroom was a fine, frank, hearty fellow, and when he met Jessie in the dance, he had eyes for no one else.

Effie, however, was the belle of the evening, and as she moved about among the guests, she might have been a queen; she had forgotten all anxieties and troubles about cutters and pressgangs, and remembered not that there was such a thing as evil in the world as Davie bent down and whispered words in her ear which made the colour heighten in her

soft cheek ; while the girls all envied her the love and attention of the young manly fellow in his blue jacket ; his kindly face, though bronzed with southern winds and storms, glowing with pride and contentment.

They knew no stately minuets these simple people, but this ignorance of the courtly measure troubled them not, indeed it was questionable if they had ever heard of them, for there is magic in the simple old reels and strathspeys and the inspiring country-dances which suited them better ; Will Kemp did his part of the performance to perfection, and I fear forgot all about Mr. Campbell's words, which it must be confessed he felt a little at the time. He was raised above the company on a barrel seat, and seemed never to weary watching the animating scene, perhaps enjoying it as much as those did who were footing it merrily on the floor.


True to their promise to the minister, the elder members of the party caused the dancing to be stopped at midnight, after the old measure of Babbity-bouster had been joined in by the greater part of the company. It was found by those who managed the affairs, that the carpenter who made the "plenishing" for the newly-married pair, returned to his house with its price in his pocket. The half-crown tickets had not only provided the repast and entertainment, but they had set the

young couple up in life free of debt. When the state of the funds was announced every one rejoiced, for all knew how kind a daughter Jessie Grieve had been to her parents, and how she had toiled to help them in their need, nobly forgetful of self; and Charlie, too, came in for his share of approval, it was as well understood how faithfully he had waited for his bride and how constant he had been to her; qualities these which the poor never fail to recognise and respect, and so amongst the hearty good wishes for their health and happiness, the bride and bridegroom left for their home, and the party broke up.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ O weary fa’ the cruel wars o’ high Germanie,
And weary fa’ the tyrant’s hand that tore my love frae me,
The sun since then seems ne’er to shine,
Nor seems the flowers to blaw,
For everything is dead and drear
Since Willie is awa.”

—ANON.

AVIE, after taking an affectionate leave of Effie, left her with her father, promising to see her in the morning, and with Uncle John and his young English friend proceeded on their way to the Glen. Quietly they walked, for the night was beautiful and still in the moonlight, with its black depth of shadows. Not a creature stirred along the whole length of the shore line or on the road before them, and the three men went on talking and laughing over the events of the evening. They passed the last house on their way, and soon reached the ruin of the old mill standing near their path, with the clear trickling burn that of old used to drive its wheel, making pleasant melody in the quiet night.

Ah! Davie Gordon, can your sharp young eyes, wont to see ships in the far distance, not discover enemies lurking in the shadow of these walls? But no; for they have taken up their position cautiously. And now, even before the three men were aware, or could lift a hand to defend themselves, they were in the grasp of an armed band of the cutter's crew. They could not resist, indeed resistance would have been useless. The one who attacked and held young Gordon wore a mask which fell off in the scuffle and revealed the face of Captain Harvey flushed with wine, at the same time dyed with shame at being detected in such an act. In a moment the young sailor saw and calculated his situation, then turning proudly to Harvey, he said in a voice which, in spite of his inward agony, remained firm and unshaken—

“Captain Harvey, ye can do your worst, I will get scant mercy at your hands, and will ask none; but what would you do with that old man?” pointing to Uncle John; “he cannot fight your battles, and my friend, must he too suffer through me?”

“We have nothing to do with the old man,” said one of the band acting as spokesman. And turning to the men that held Uncle John said, “Fellows, release your prisoner, we don't want old men and babes to fight the battles of our country; but these young fellows, hold them fast.” Uncle John had been at first so stupefied that he had remained speechless in

the grasp of his captors until Davie's voice recalled him to his senses, and when his young relation turned to him and grasped his hand, saying in a sad voice, "Farewell, my kind friend, the only father I have ever known," he turned round on his enemies and said, "What do ye seek at our hands? Is it money? Take everything I have, but spare my laddie."

"That will not serve us," said the former speaker, for Harvey had slunk back ashamed to meet the eye of the man he had so cruelly injured. "It is not gold we want, but men; and these two young fellows are likely subjects for our use." The young Englishman, like Uncle John, had at first been so stunned he knew not what to say, but when he took in the situation, he too disdained to ask pity at their hands, and only muttered, "O God! my poor mother!"

With the fierceness of despair Uncle John, now come to himself, exclaimed, "Oh, men, are ye men or are ye monsters? Leave my laddie to me if ye have hearts in your bosoms; dinna quench the only coal I hae left on my hearth, and make it desolate!"

To this appeal the officer replied by saying to Davie and his friend, "Come, young men, let us be off, we have had enough of talking; and you, old man, go home to your house, and don't try to obstruct those who are on duty." Then Davie turned to his relative and wildly, convulsively

wrung his hand; it was all they could do, these two stricken ones, while sadly they looked in each other's eyes, and the moon shone down on them in all its splendour.

"Tell Effie never to forget me!" cried Davie in sorrowful tones; "and oh! be kind to her. I leave her in your care—she will need all your kindness—God help and comfort her!" And so they parted, the two young men accompanying the sailors to the ship, heart-sick but resolute to bear without shrinking their hard fate; while Uncle John, stupefied with grief, staggered home to his lonely dwelling to hear the burst of rage and indignation with which Mysie assailed the crew of the cutter, and I fear, Christian though she was, cursing in her heart the men-stealers who had no compassion, no remorse for the desolate homes they left behind them in their bloodhound-like track.

The Glen was not the only home bereaved of its hope and stay that night. Truly and surely these men had calculated on their plunder; different parties of them had been stationed at points where it was known the young fisher lads would pass on their road from the wedding, and a plentiful harvest was thus realised of the unsuspecting defenceless sailors.

The only incident which relieved the sadness of that dreadful night was the capture by one of the

parties of the lame fiddler, whom they brought, without perceiving their mistake, to the officer at the small inn where they were appointed to meet before they went on board, having partaken too freely of grog. Kemp, in mortal terror, had tried to expostulate with his captors, but they were too much engrossed to listen to his remonstrances; therefore, in fear and trembling, he was dragged along as part of the valuable prey they had taken.

"Who have you brought us, fellows?" exclaimed that gentleman, turning to his men in anger, thinking they were making fun of him. "What have we to do with lame men? Who are you, man? What has brought you here?"

"Will Kemp, with your leave, sir," cried the fiddler in despair; "I would gang down on my knees to ye, my lord, or whatever title ye may have, only I canna do it wi' my stick leg."

"Will Kemp," answered the officer, now laughing heartily, for he perceived the mistake his men had made, also the agony of the poor wretch, "and what can you do, Will, to serve His Majesty?"

"Troth, no muckle, sir," was the answer; "I tell't them that, when they were bringing me alang, but ye might speak yersel hoarse and nane o' them wad listen; sae if you please, sir, my lord, I'll pop away hame, for what would the lads and lassies do at their weddings if it werena for Will, and the auld wives

too, for that bit o't, for ye see in the springtime I dibble in their tatties wi' my stick leg."


"Bring him a glass of grog some of you there," said the gentleman, "to make amends for the fear he has gotten, and to drink to the health of His Majesty, and success to the British arms."

"I dinna ken," answered the cautious Will, "I've maybe gotten as muckle afore the night as was gude for me, sae, if you please, I'll just be stumpin' hame, thanks a' the same to you." And so saying Will touched his hat and left the company, only too thankful to make his escape so easily; and though he thought it no laughing matter at the time, it was a fine adventure for him to brag about afterwards.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Oh ! grief beyond all griefs, when fate
First leaves the young heart lone and desolate
In the wide world, without that only tie
For which it loved to live, or feared to die.
Lorn as the hung-up lute, that ne’er hath spoken
Since the sad day its master-chord was broken.”

MOORE.

EXT morning, when the news of the capture of their best and bravest fell on the inhabitants of Grey Craigs, it filled them with rage and fury, while to those more nearly concerned it brought despair and desolation. They had not counted upon the cutter sending out her men at midnight to prowl about their streets and seize upon the flower of their fishermen, and so they were unprepared for the attack. The matter was made worse by the share Harvey, their own townsman, was known to have had in the affair ; indeed, the whole plot had been planned by him the evening he and his friends heard from his sister Alice of the marriage of Jessie Grieve. This behaviour of Harvey’s was partly to be revenged on Davie Gordon

and Effie, and partly to curry favour with the Government. He durst not remain, however, after the misery he had caused, for had he appeared amongst them at Grey Craigs, he doubtless would have paid for his rashness with his life, so he wisely quitted the place to join his regiment, and the cutter sailed away with her freight of living souls, leaving many a broken heart behind.

When the tidings reached the manse at Grey Craigs, Mr. Campbell hastened among the afflicted people to do his best to comfort them in their sorrow.

It was to the smithy he first found his way, and there was Martin at his post, as he had been years before when the great sorrow of his life had met him—a sorrow that, now when he was old, was still in his heart, and last night's work had recalled it in all its bitterness again, and deepened the shadow on his brow.

"I am glad to find you able to work, smith," said the minister kindly; "I was afraid this blow would crush you greatly."

"I feel it nane the less that I am working," he answered, stopping in the shoeing of a horse to wipe the sweat from his brow. He stood in the full glow of the firelight, suffering and trials adding a dignity to his form and stature, and then he added reverently, "It's the will of the Lord, and what can we

say. Cruel, cruel it seems to be, but He permits it. But ye maun gang in, Mr. Campbell, and speak a word to the bit lassie; she is fairly stunned, and has neither spoken nor tasted meat since she heard the news."

When Mr. Campbell entered the cottage he found Effie going about her work mechanically, but with such a sad look on her young face as made the tears start to her minister's eyes. "I have come to see you, Effie," he said kindly, while his voice quivered. "The Lord comfort you, poor child!"

"I am obliged to you for coming to see me," said Effie in a dry, hard voice, and with a tearless eye; "it's real kind of you."

"Can you not trust the love and mercy of your Heavenly Father, Effie?" asked the minister quietly. "He has permitted this for His own wise ends, which we poor mortals cannot see, but, Effie, oh! trust Him — 'at eventide it shall be light;' and then, Effie, don't lose hope, Davie may return again soon, a great man, for there are elements of greatness in Gordon's character."

"Naething seems to hae ony power to comfort me," said the girl sadly; "even the very Bible seems to add to my sorrow, for the only words o't that keep sounding in my ears are, 'Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him, but weep for him that

goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.’”

“You are cruel to yourself, Effie,” said the minister. “‘The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations,’ and you are taking them to open up your wounds; rather, poor girl, remember Him who says, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me.’ Cheer up, and put your trust in God, and brighter days may come. You are both young and can afford to wait, and depend upon it the Lord, who can bring good out of evil, will ‘lead you both by a right way to a city of habitation,’ where there shall be no more partings, no more sorrow, and where all tears shall be wiped from every eye.”

After engaging in a short but suitable prayer Mr. Campbell left, and Miss Ramsay took his place; and at the sight of her dear friend the tears fell from Effie’s eyes in showers, which in some measure relieved her bursting heart. Miss Ramsay could not speak, but she gathered the poor, stricken, motherless girl to her arms, and let her weep in silence.

Mr. Campbell, when he left the smith’s cottage, went from house to house trying to comfort the bereaved families, for a cry had gone up almost like that in Egypt when the people had lost their firstborn, so sorely did these poor folks mourn; they knew too well that few of those who had

been torn from them would ever return to their homes again. Uncle John was inconsolable; he was like "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not," and Mysie was not more calm, only bitterness and rage were more mingled with her grief.

Reuben was the first to bring the news to Briary Park. He and Mrs. Nelson had had their own fears the evening that Arthur and his friends had met and were whispering together, and so he met her in the morning with an account of the sad work of the night before, telling her of the capture of Davie and his young English friend, "a Suffolk lad," said Reuben, "called Ray Blanchard." A scream from Mrs. Nelson at this last announcement made him start and rush forward in time to prevent her falling fainting on the floor. Ray Blanchard, a Suffolk lad,—there could be but one bearing such an uncommon name, and from that county; yes, Ray Blanchard was her brother's son, the youth she loved so well, and who, unknown to her, had been in her neighbourhood for some time, but she had only heard of the thing from the fatal results. Neither had the young man been aware of his aunt's nearness to himself. "Oh, if they had known, if they had but met!" and Mrs. Nelson wrung her hands in desperation when she woke up from her swoon.

Time rolled on until the Sabbath dawned, with its

holy peace, calling the sorrowful inhabitants to cease from their labours for a few hours, and "taste of the rest the Lord had prepared for them that love Him."

Soon the sweet chimes began sounding through the still clear air, and sending their echoes up and down the valleys. There were other churches in the town, new and fine edifices, but holy memories clustered round the ancient meeting-house across the Links, and none of the Dissenters ever thought of leaving it, or being tempted away from its simplicity, by what was more fashionable or grand. Graves stood around it, parting the ever-living tide of life from the stillness and silence of death. The graves of the poor and unknown in this world—it might be only those of the village cobbler or weaver, while of their mothers, sisters, and wives, nothing save their names and years were recorded as proof of woman's sole calling, and her place on the earth as man's spouse, sister, or daughter—graves, many of them a century old. The inscriptions on the headstones, too, had a word of comfort written upon them for the passers-by—"In the hope of blessed Resurrection!" "Rest from their Labours!"—and it made them feel that in their sorrow it was well to meet there, where neighbours and friends met weekly and talked gravely, and where in summer the children played, and gathered the gowans from their sod.

In the old church porch, over against the plate where the people laid their offerings, stood Uncle John that Sabbath, doing part of his duty as an elder of the kirk. Very sad he looked in his antique blue coat and thick white muslin cravat. He spoke little to his brother elder beside him, and only nodded to the people as they passed in, but all looked up at him with reverence and pity, knowing and respecting his great sorrow, while the sun shone warm and bright, making the ancient porch almost bright in its beams.

More solemnly and thoughtfully even than usual did Mr. Campbell, too, on that day, walk up the steps of the old-fashioned pulpit stair, and seat himself under the curious, unshapely sounding-board. After a pause of a few minutes, when his head was bent in prayer, he rose and feelingly gave out the psalm to be sung by the congregation—

“Jehovah hear thee in the day
When trouble He doth send,
And let the name of Jacob's God
Thee from all ill defend.”

If the singing was not by highly-trained and cultivated voices, it was at anyrate earnestly and from the heart that these simple people praised God; and many a sob was heard throughout the church, for the psalm touched a chord of sorrow in many a desolate, bleeding soul.

The prayer with which Mr. Campbell led the congregation was rich and full of heartfelt expression, and a simple looking to God as a Father who cared for and loved His children—the very kind of prayer to soothe and comfort the bereaved. Many of the faces in that assembly were so white and wan that the minister's heart well-nigh failed him when he gave out his text and began to preach, looking around him on the sitters in the pews. Others there were who seemed as if they had been tossed, and broken, and beaten back, and only escaped with their life, and yet over all there was a quiet uncomplaining patience, more touching far than any wildness of grief could have been. The text was the words of the old travel-stained patriarch Jacob, when his sons returned from Egypt and told him that to save their lives he must part with Benjamin. And he answered them, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." And yet Mr. Campbell argued that what Jacob thought to be against him was in reality amongst the "*all* things that work together for good to them that love God, and are the heirs according to promise." He parted with Benjamin, and not only found him again, but also his long-lost and dearly-loved son Joseph, whom he never expected to see again in the flesh; and now he has got both the sons of his best-beloved wife restored to him—that wife

of whose death, even as an old dying man, he touchingly records, "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan," &c.; and not only are they restored, but by means of Joseph his own life and the lives of his other sons are preserved, and he could say at last, "It is enough!" And so reasoned Mr. Campbell, that if they would only trust God in the darkness, they would find it would be well; yes, *well*, even though they were allowed to leave this world without having seen the wonderful workings of His power—bringing good out of evil—they would know it in another and better land, for we are told that "what we know not here we shall know hereafter." He then spoke of God's love for His people, that though He chastened them it was only because He loved them, bidding them be comforted in this, that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without His permission, and that they must look beyond man in this sad calamity, and feel in it the hand of a loving Heavenly Father.

Words such as these, spoken earnestly and simply, fell like dew on many hearts that day in the church, and more cheerfully could they join in the parting psalm—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid;
My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heaven and earth hath made."

Even Uncle John was somewhat calmed down, and Effie, with the hope of a better life, let a hope for a reunion here with her betrothed steal into her heart. The Sabbath was indeed a day of rest and calm to these weary, afflicted, storm-tossed people, for few amongst them had not in some way or other suffered from the hands of the spoiler; and sad would their lot have been if they could not have gone to the house of God and got help to lay their burden down.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ It is not on the battlefield
That I would wish to die ;
It is not on a broken shield
I'd breathe my latest sigh.
And though a soldier knows not how
To dread a soldier's doom,
I ask no laurel for my grave—
No trophy for my tomb.”—OLD SONG.



OUR story must now pass over some years since the capture of the young men at Grey Craigs.

It is a night after an engagement between the enemy and a detachment of the British troops on the shores of Spain. There had been hard fighting all day, and at last the arms of the English proved victorious, and the foe had been repulsed with great slaughter. And now, when the shades of evening began to fall around, the officer in command, our old friend Davie Gordon, passed with his men over the field of battle to seek their dead, to bury them, and to carry the wounded to the ship. There is a great sorrow in the officer's heart

this day, for his young and gallant friend Ray Blanchard had been shot dead at his side. Deep and strong had been the love between these two men, and Davie felt that with his friend much of sunshine had passed out of his life.

When the men commenced their search the sun was setting amidst floating clouds of blended saffron and gold, and the dark shadows of the neighbouring mountains were falling across the plain, throwing still deeper into shade the gloomy antique streets of the adjacent city, where confusion and dismay yet reigned. Numberless watch-fires cast their lurid glare on the slow-rolling, broad-bosomed river, lighting up also the dark groves of olives overhanging its glassy surface. The battle had raged the hottest in the forest, into the depths of which the soldiers penetrated, lighted by the moon which now rose over the city and poured a full flood of its silvery light on all around.

The trees were in full foliage, and the branches hung heavy with dew, which they pushed aside in their progress, rending at the same time the webs of silver gauze which the busy spiders were weaving in the moonbeams. The waving lemon-trees glittered in many shades of green, while dark masses of shadow, cast by the huge trunks of the chestnut, were interspersed with streaks of light falling silently on the grass; very clear and full fell that

light on the pale and rigid features of the dead, fierce and contracted from the recent death-struggle, and on the wounded and dying, quivering with intensity of agony, grasping the gory ground with convulsive clutch, or raising their hands and eyes imploring pity and assistance.

It was not long before Gordon found the dead body of his friend; but he had passed away quietly and calmly, and his face in death had the same sweet expression that it wore in life.

"My brother, my more than brother!" exclaimed Gordon, as he bent over it, and a tear trickled from his cheek, which he wiped off with his hand; but it was no time for grief, and so wrapping him in his cloak they quickly dug a grave and laid him where he had fallen, grasping his sword in his dead hand.

It was a sad and dreadful time, as all through the long night the wearied men toiled at their sorrowful work; some digging graves for the dead, whose only shroud was their tattered and bloody uniform, and their coffin the military cloak; and others conveying the wounded in carts to the boats. Not till the gray light of morning dawn did their labour cease.

The officer, Captain Gordon, is much changed since the night of the penny wedding, more than four years ago. He has got an air of command in

his bearing, but his face is as sunny and kindly as ever. His young fiery spirit has been tempered and subdued by suffering and trial. And now, when the ship was sailing for England, Gordon had time to look after the sick and dying, and to speak a kind word to some poor storm-tossed soul. Passing near one poor fellow desperately wounded, he was surprised to be called by name. Gordon approached him, and asked kindly "if he could do anything to serve him?"

"You come from Grey Craigs?" murmured the soldier faintly.

"I do," was the answer; "do you come from that place also?"

The soldier shook his head, but said softly, "I do not belong to it, but I have, or once had, a brother and sister there. Mr. Ramsay the schoolmaster is my brother."

"Mr. Ramsay!" exclaimed Gordon; "I know him well, and also his sister. Are you, can you be, the long-lost and sorely mourned for brother?"

"They speak of me then?" he said, and a gleam of pleasure passed over his face. "I thought they would have forgotten me. I was the prodigal son, but now I can say, like another prodigal in the Bible, 'I will arise and go to my Father,' and He will not cast me out."

"Thanks be unto God for these words!" said

Gordon reverently; "and now, my man, tell me, are you badly wounded? I will take good care of all the sufferers, but more especially of you for the sake of your brother and sister."

"The doctor tells me I cannot live many days, if I even see over to-morrow," was the answer; "once it would have been fearful news, now, thanks be to the Lord! He sent and saved me in His great mercy—me, the chief of sinners. And I wish you to tell this to my friends at home. Surely their prayers held me up in the midst of sin and wanderings. I was determined when I got opportunity to make my way home, but you see there is no chance now. I am only glad I have seen you, that you might take a message to them."

"Well, you must speak no more just now," said Gordon kindly. "I will come and see you whenever I can get away from my duties."

For some days Ramsay lingered, though getting weaker and weaker; still he was able to speak a little, and tell of his past life, that Gordon might be able to satisfy the curiosity of his brother and sister, should he ever see them again. At last, on the morning of the fourth day after the battle, he breathed his last, quietly and peacefully, leaving his few possessions to Gordon to take home to his friends, and amongst them was his Bible, which he considered his greatest treasure. It had been kept through all

his wanderings, even though he had lived so long without prizing its contents; but then the inscription on its blank leaf explained the secret. The ink was faded, and the date was twenty years back, but still the writing was quite legible. It ran thus:—

“Archibald Ramsay, Blinkbonny; the gift of a loving mother.” And then followed the simple lines called

“A MOTHER’S GIFT.”

“Remember, love, who gave thee this,
When other days shall come;
When she who had thy earliest kiss
Sleeps in her narrow home.
Remember, ’twas a mother gave
The gift to one she’d die to save.

“That mother sought a pledge of love,
The noblest for her son;
And from the gifts of God above
She chose a goodly one;
She chose for her beloved boy
The source of light, and life, and joy;

“And bade him keep the gift, that when
The parting hour should come,
They might have hope to meet again
In an eternal home.
She said his faith in that would be
Sweet incense to her memory.

“And should the scoffer in his pride
Laugh that fond faith to scorn,
And bid him cast the pledge aside
That he from youth had borne—
She bade him pause, and ask his breast
Which of the two *could* love him best.


“A parent's blessing on her son
Goes with this precious thing;
The love that would reclaim the one
Must to the other cling,
Remember 'tis no idle toy—
A mother's gift!—remember, boy.”

The next day the body of Ramsay was lowered into its watery grave, the chaplain repeating over it these solemn words, “We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body when the sea shall give up the dead,” and then with a heavy plunge, the corpse, swathed in its rough cerement, disappeared with a gurgling sound amidst the waves, and shut out for ever all that was mortal of Ramsay, the prodigal son.

CHAPTER XXV.

" All was ended now, the hope, the fear, and the sorrow ;
All the achings of heart, the restless unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience."

—LONGFELLOW.

UMMERS have passed away at Grey Craigs noiselessly as our summers pass—with purple mornings when the sun rose amidst an anthem of singing birds, until the hour when the long fiery gleams of red light thrown across the waters to the shore told that it was setting again. Through the quiet fields the cows went soberly to and from the rich pasture tended by the little herd-boys and girls to whose voice distance lent a strange charm and cadence. Summer, when the guelder rose and the sweetbriar filled the air with fragrance, and the dainty eyebright and blue-bell flourished on the *auld fauld dykes* of many a Scottish moor and lea, while the yellow broom waved luxuriantly on the hillsides or by the sunny braes where the burns wimples down to the sea.

Autumns, too, had come and gone with their crisp

breezes bearing aloft ripened odours of orchard and forest, where the white blossoms of the hawthorn and rowan trees had given place to bunches of red hips and scarlet berries which hung over crystal pools in many a copsewood glen, and in the uplands the ripened grain waved golden in the wind, studded here and there with blue corn-flowers and scarlet poppies.

And so had followed winters with their sparkling mantles of snow, under which everything lay sealed, when trees and shrubs were draped in white, and the sunsets come before the early dark, flaming crimson in the west, mellowing into a liquid orange, and the vehicles which passed along the scarcely distinguishable roads with a dull muffled sound, seemed like objects moving in a dream.

And so in like manner springs had been, and were gone, mingling with the things of the past. Springs with their fresh winds, lengthening days, and magical sunshine, under which the old elms became clothed in a livery of tender green, when unfolding leaflets pushed off their varnished cases and sprung into beauty, and restless swallows darted, like gleams of silver, from their nests in cottage eaves.

It was five years now since Davie Gordon and the other fishermen of Grey Craigs had been pressed. Occasionally tidings of them had reached the little town to cheer and gladden the hearts of those

who loved them, but some were not spared to hear of good and noble deeds done by husband and son.

Davie had written comforting words when he had opportunity. He was rising in his profession, he had thrown his heart into it, manly fellow that he was, with his nobleness, his hatred of sham, and his eager grappling with the life he had been forced to take up, while all the time his heart and affections were at Grey Craigs; and though Effie longed to see him again, she rejoiced when she heard how true and loyal-hearted he was, and the large place he was filling in the world. She knew his stern justice, his honesty clear and true, and his searching into what was good and pure, and she wept quietly with a deep pride in her heart, for to her, her lover was the ideal of a man. His plain sincerity in speech had underneath it an almost woman's softness, but that was better than a false-polished grace. It must be some time still before she could hope to see him, for his years of service had not expired; till then she would wait and pray, and accept letters in room of himself. But, as I said, there were others not spared to hear tidings of the loved and lost.

Kirsty Temple, the young and cherished wife of one of the finest and lightest-hearted of the band, had joined the congregation of the dead in the

Dissenters' burial-ground. She had died with her husband's name on her lips. The light of her life had gone slowly down, flashing a little at the last with a parting ray, then changing, getting darker, and at last, settling in a moveless peace; the neighbours had taken the children home amongst them, the poor orphan little ones, to keep them until their father's return. But he never returned; he heard of his loss, and, brave man though he was, he wept like a child. Even then the boom of the cannon was sounding in his ears, and he fell in the front of the battle, and was buried by strange hands in the land of the stranger.

Another lad, Patie, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, had received his death-wound in the same battle when standing at his post, and had passed away quietly in the drooping shadows with a cry gasped from earth to heaven, "Mother, I have not forgotten your God, and He is with me now!" and the old woman, without repining or complaint, had heard the tidings and tried to bear up. She had swept the earthen floor of her little cottage and made the fireplace bright, just as she used to do when "her laddie" came bounding in to gladden her eyes. One could scarcely have known that the house was desolate; she had sat by her lonely hearth working nets or knitting stockings for the daily bread which she must now win with her own

hands. There was scarce a sound in the hushed house but the constant tick of the clock telling of the passing hours and minutes, each one of which was employed.

But at last she sickened, poor desolate one, and with the story of Jacob wandering in her brain, she kept saying—

“Me have ye bereaved of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin away. One went from me and I saw him not since; and if ye take this also from me, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

At last she died, not sorry to be called away, since all that had made life pleasant to her had gone, and she, too, lay in the shadow of the old trees by the churchyard wall.

Thus passed time away at Grey Craigs, with its mingled web of joys and sorrows. Effie was in a measure content. The sea was to her like a friend, with its ever-varying monotony. How she loved that fresh, restless ocean—Davie’s home; and when she could spare an hour from her busy work she would wander to its shores. Especially on the summer Sabbath evenings would she steal out on the braes, all waving and tufted over with brambles or low bushes of wild roses, which made the seaside road fragrant and gay; or sit and watch the tide bursting with deafening strokes through narrow

openings in the rocks with deep thunder booms, to be cast back again into jets of foam among the angry breakers. As she sat thus her thoughts would turn from earth to heaven, and she would repeat solemnly—

“The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him!” her heart lifted up and borne over grief, and loss, and restless longing—feeling herself and time so little compared with the wide expanse of a coming eternity, where “there would be no more sea.”

It was the close of a gloomy December day, twilight was slowly passing into night. The dark sky lowered upon the dark waters, with only the crest of a wave or some benighted sea-mew fluttering to its nest to break the general gloom around. But the dark scene without only made the interior of the smith's cottage appear more cheerful, with its trim, bright fire and well-swept hearth. The *crusie* (oil lamp) burned over the mantel shelf, and the kettle sung on the side of the grate, while Effie's pretty grey cat slept comfortably within the fender.

Effie was alone in the house, spinning on the big wheel, which made a drowsy, monotonous brrr in the silence around; she hummed a song as she moved backwards and forwards drawing out the fine woollen thread. Her neat, lithe figure was shown to advantage in that attitude, as also was her well-shaped

arm, bare to the elbow, and her delicate hand, of which any lady might be proud, though it did much coarse, menial work. Her face was fair as in girlhood, but sorrow had written lines on it, and matured it early, for sorrow is a stern but salutary school-mistress to a gracious heart.

As Effie worked, the latch of the door was lifted, and Uncle John entered with the newspaper which had just arrived for him in the town. She received him warmly, and placed the arm-chair comfortably for him that he might see by the light of the crusie to read its contents. The farmer not only was Effie's old friend, but, dearer still, he was the relative of her betrothed, and deep was the love between the two, bound by that strong chord of affection for the absent one. He was scarcely seated when a fisherman's wife, who had seen him enter the house, rushed after him, and waiting not to ask admission, hurried up to his seat, and with an agitated voice begged him to see if there were any news of the "Thunderbolt,"—for Tam was in it, and she had heard a sound just now at the quay of a vessel being lost and all on board drowned, and "God pity us!" she exclaimed, "for what would the bairns and me do if their faither was taen away."

Effie tried to speak words of comfort to her, though she herself was feeling sick with anxiety, for this was the first she had heard of such a report.

"Sit down, Alie," said Effie kindly, "dinna weary yoursel' standing; an' trust in God, maybe it's no true what ye hae heard; and yet," she added, "O Davie, Davie, it is maybe true, and it may be your fate as well as others."

Alie tried to keep the seat she mechanically took, but she could not; she could only move back and forward, stopping every moment to look piteously up in the old man's face and cry, "Hae ye no seen onything yet?" Uncle John, scarcely less moved, tried to steady his hands and eyes to look over the paper. At last, as if spell-bound, he sat motionless, and the paper dropped from his hand to the floor, while his face grew livid as that of a corpse. "Oh, it's true, then, ower true," cried the poor woman sobbing, "O my God! my Tam, my faitherless bairns!"

"What is it, Uncle John?" exclaimed Effie, seizing the old man's arm. But Uncle John was bewildered and speechless.

"It's here, Effie, here," said Alie, lifting the paper, and trying to read its contents; and then she gave a scream of joy, and, falling on her knees, exclaimed, "The Lord be praised, it's no the 'Thunderbolt' that's lost, it's the 'Fury' that has gaen down,—no a man saved."

A moan by her side awakened Alie to a consciousness that her joy was some other's sorrow, and she looked round in time to save Effie from falling on

the floor. The "Fury" was the vessel of which Gordon was captain, and of that for the first time the poor woman was aware.

She lifted Effie in her arms, and with the help of the old man carried her to her little attic room, from the window of which years before she had stood and dreamed waking dreams of her lover.

Even after consciousness had returned, the powers of life seemed to have come to a standstill, and only one dim vague feeling of misery was left her. Never again would a breath of the south wind come to stir the dead leaves fallen on her heart's spring. The old man could not comfort her, he could only struggle with hard gasping sobs, crying, "The Lord help me, a puir desolate auld man, for I needna mourn for Davie, he's won hame afore us a'."

The neighbours came to sympathise with the bereaved family, and very soothing and heartfelt was their sympathy. Miss Ramsay wept with the bereaved girl, and the minister and his wife lost no time in visiting the desolate cottage, the minister entering with the words of the grand old psalm on his lips, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." It needed such a word to raise the mind above the broken cisterns of this world; but oh! the hope that had been wrenched suddenly away, the long labour and waiting, and the unchang-

ing force that had held them true to each other,—true, though that fevered passion had calmed down into pure tender friendship—a friendship deeper, and stronger, and truer than anything on earth beside—a friendship patient, and holy, such as can only be between man and woman.

Effie's sole answer to all the words of sympathy was, "Everybody's kind to me, far kinder than I deserve." But this daughter of the old Dissenter at Grey Craigs never thought of self-indulgence, she had been trained in the school of affliction to endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and so she lifted her head quietly after the stroke that had turned her joy into mourning, and meekly took up the sorrow which had fallen upon her path, and went to God with it.

And it was well for her that thus it was, and it is well for those whom stern principle or necessity call forth from the selfish gratification of grief to the common prosaic business of life,—the brown but wholesome bread of the poor, which the pampered appetite of the rich refuses, while it nourishes to its heart the languid, sickly banquet of indulged sorrow.

The sight of her uncomplaining grief awed the neighbours around, for they saw how nobly and bravely she bore her burden—she with the prospect of a long life before her, and to whom the young sailor had been so much.

And so Effie grew into that character rarely seen except amidst the Scottish, with their Calvinism and deep theological training, or where the New England air comes loaded with a Puritan flavour; slow of growth, perhaps, but surely growing; walking sternly over self-grumbling, never complaining though the thorns in their path pierce and wound their feet; and so all the more lovingly looking forward to a life hereafter. They, and they more than others, can sing—

“ Not here ! not here ! not where the sparkling waters
 Fade into mocking sands as we draw near,
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters,
 ‘ I shall be satisfied ; ’ but oh, not here !

“ Not here ! where all the dreams of bliss deceive us,
 Where the worn spirit never gains its goal ;
Where haunted ever by the thoughts that grieve us,
 Across us floods of bitter memory roll.

“ There is a land where every pulse is thrilling
 With raptures earth's sojourners may not know ;
Where Heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,
 And peacefully life's time-tossed currents flow.

“ Far out of sight, while sorrows still unfold us,
 Lies the fair country where our hearts abide,
And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us
 Than these few words, ‘ I shall be satisfied.’

“ ‘ I shall be satisfied,’ the spirit's yearning
 For sweet companionship with kindred minds ;
The silent love that here meets no returning ;
 The inspiration which no language finds.

“ ‘Shall they be satisfied?’ the soul’s vague longings,
The aching void which nothing earthly fills?
Oh ! what desires upon my heart are thronging,
As I look upward to the heavenly hills.

“ Thither my weak and weary steps are tending ;
Saviour and Lord ! with Thy frail child abide ;
Guide me to home, where, all my wanderings ended,
I shall Thee see, and ‘ shall be satisfied.’ ”

By and by a calm came on the excitement, and the loss of the “Fury” turned to be a matter of history, for no tidings reached them of how the ill-fated ship went down, as no one was left to tell the tale.

CHAPTER XXVI.

" But say to what pledge of memory's hoard
Is the wealth of that mystic wine-cup poured ?
Is it time ? to his ever onward track
And his tireless step that hath ne'er turned back.
To his glass ? with whose dim sands ceaseless flow,
Beauty and strength and glory go.
And his scythe ?—which the nation's might hath mown.
Let us drink to these,—but not these alone."

—F. BROWNE.



MY tale again passes over a good many years. More than five since the sad tidings came of the loss of the "Fury," and more then ten since Davie Gordon was taken from his home—ten years with the sunshine coming and going. Day after day, and month after month, how noiselessly they glided past, each one so like the other that people forgot to count them or to remember that they were growing old ; and the everyday current of a common living bore them along ; and through the web of life the shuttle was quietly weaving our story, a simple one it may be, with the Heavenly Weaver superintending His work.

Ten years, and Effie had turned her back upon

youth. The spring and part of the summer lay behind her. She had climbed to the top of the hill, and must now descend. There was no pause—no standing still, for we cannot take hold of the garments of Time and stop him in his flight. Hers had been of late an uneventful, quiet life, disturbed by few storms, full of peace, and rich with love and kindness. There had been the one great sorrow, but content had crept into the chilled existence, and so to Effie, as to all, the days had glided past with steps so soft that they left behind no print ; and as with the days, so with the years—slowly, you scarce could call them tedious.

Effie might have married, and then her life would have branched off into new channels ; new duties and new pleasures might have lured her from the old life of the past. There were those who would willingly have helped her and cherished her, but it could not be, there was a feeling strong in her, earnest as life itself—that she who had been loved by such a man, and whom she had loved in return, could never again find another mate. Married she might be, not mated ; and though she drifted out of her old years, still the memory of her first and only love was there, green and fresh as on the day they parted ; and thus the days and years of her youth had glided from her uncounted, for no light of a second love could ever rest on her again.

She had seen the young men and maidens of her own age pass away into the whirl of life, marry and gather round them little tottering feet. Lovers we said she had had, for when sorrow comes early and does not harden, it sometimes leaves behind a charm rarer than beauty; but Effie felt that real true heart-marriage needed to be deep and strong, and having none to give, she had given up all the sweetness of wifehood and motherhood, and stood there in her fading bloom, speaking no word, but letting her whole life's story tell the tale of "faithful unto death."

Her father and Uncle John were now her first care, but other hearts were also dependent upon her, and the friends of her youth still clung to her; she had learned the lesson of contentment going solitary down the hill of life, and her rare example made others contented also.

Ten years and the old house at the Glen still stood in its primitive simplicity, little changed since the days of Effie's childhood. It has still its little garden and the white gate by which Martin entered when he came to talk of politics, and of Davie, to the master, and the burn gurgles past as of old on its way to the sea. But Uncle John is no longer the fresh, strong man he was then. True, time has dealt gently with him, but it has made changes, and he is now an old man leaning on a staff; and Mysie is still his housekeeper, though she only gives direc-

tions from the snug corner where may be heard the drowsy motion of her spinning-wheel, while younger and more abler hands execute them.

Then Uncle John is a rich man now, a mine of mineral wealth has been discovered in his land, and he would not value it but for the lurking hope in his heart that Davie was not drowned, and that he will yet return to inherit it. In the meantime this wealth, so little cared for, he would fain share with Effie and her father, grown too old and feeble, but Martin will not accept what he has not lawfully earned; he says he has enough; and so the smithy is still carried on for him by Tibbie's son Jock, who promises to be a wiser man than was his father, Davie's ploughman friend years before.

The manse stood with its meeting-house close by, surrounded as of old by its churchyard, grey with stones and green with turf, holding its century of the dead; and within—its queer square pews unaltered, having still its aroma in summer of fragrant flowers. But another voice sounded from the pulpit, for Mr. Campbell had gone the way of all the earth, and only his grave remained standing by the wall of the church, over which flourished a hawthorn tree. His wife had returned to her own kindred and the friends of her youth, and taken her son with her. They would fain have kept her amongst them, these simple, kindly people at Grey Craigs, for they loved

her, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of the kind and faithful pastor who had gone in and out amongst them, in joy and sorrow, and distributed to them the Bread of Life.

Mr. and Miss Ramsay, too, still lived in the snug schoolhouse, "the maister" rearing up the young to be a credit to their country, and Miss Ramsay still mourning for her lost brother, though time had deprived the grief of its sting, and both feeling as of old the deepest interest in Effie Martin and all with whom she was connected.

And thus the little circle that played the principal part in this our story of humble life had remained untouched by any vital change. But the neighbourhood had not remained unaltered. The quiet primitive life—the gentle ripple of the waters—the waving woods and cornfields vocal with songs of birds—the rich pasture lands on which drowsy cattle lowed, have disappeared, no trace left behind; and in their room was the smoke and noise of a dusty factory village.

Briary Park, too, had suffered in these years, for the family cared not to live there after Arthur's betrayal of the town lads, and so they had remained abroad, and the old house was falling into disrepair. The wind and sun had faded and dulled its brightness. Moss had grown between its stones and among the carved garlands on the Harvey arms

above the pillars of the entrance gate, on the devices that adorned its front, and it is lying too in the little round cushions in the joints of the great stone steps that lead to its wide hall.

And in these years the nation had still been going on in much its old way. Government had been trying to stamp out liberal opinions, and though succeeding for a time to crush the outward expression of them, they were only gaining strength and slumbering silently—opinions which, a few years later, were destined to make themselves heard with such a voice of thunder as no enemy could dispute. The principal exponents of these opinions were to be found at the bar, but with the fate of Muir constantly put before them, the holders of them were obliged to act cautiously and to remain quiet, and bide their time. To these were added a few professors in the colleges, advocates, with a sprinkling of honest far-seeing men, forming a rear-rank. But the press was gagged, and no public advocating of their rights was allowed.

The Town Councils elected the members of Parliament for the cities, and the freeholders, the men of landed property, did the same for the counties, and these, were all Tories and supporters of Government. The nation was literally dumb, the wishes of the people despised, and not only so, but Government lent itself to the odious practice of sending

out spies into the counties most dissatisfied, to mix amongst the people, and, while pretending to sympathise with them in their wish for freedom, betray them. The most notorious of these spies was a man named Richmond, who came to the west country, and associating himself with the poor weavers, wrought sore evil among them. The few brave men who tried to make their voices heard in condemnation of such treachery suffered in various ways. Some were transported, and others underwent capital punishment. One of the foremost of these men was the old schoolmaster of Strathaven, a man of singularly blameless and honourable life; but for the single crime of holding liberal opinions he was condemned to die on the scaffold. His body after his death being interred in the jail burying-place, his two sisters rose at midnight, and scaling the walls, dug it up and reinterred it privately amongst his kindred in the churchyard of the village. The country was groaning underneath a cruel bondage.

An old friend used to tell, that when a boy he was taken to see the execution of a Radical in a town in the west of Scotland. The sight was burned into his brain, and never, even in his later years, could he speak of the scene but with a shudder. He never heard the name of the criminal, but remembered him distinctly as a decent-looking, middle-aged man, and he was told that the crime for which

he suffered was posting upon a door an invitation to attend a meeting showing up the abuses of the times.

My friend was carried with the crowd to the foot of the gallows. He saw the criminal dressed in white clothes edged with black. Fascinated he watched the whole proceedings. He noticed the poor fellow start back aghast when he looked down on the thousands of eyes gazing upon him, and read in many of them hate and execration, for the ignorant mob could not judge for themselves the rights of the case. He saw him shrink back a little, and whisper some words in the ear of the executioner, unheard by the crowd, but which were afterwards known to be, "Oh! man, man, what a sight!" A minute more and he was swinging in the air. When life was found to be extinct, the body was taken down, and the head being struck off, it was carried round amidst the crowd; who raged and shouted, "So let traitors die!" And so they called this man, because he loved his country and sought to save her sons from slavery and degradation. One incident more connected with that event the narrator never could forget; as he flew home, faint and dizzy, he noticed a woman spring out from amidst the multitude, and throwing herself on the earth, writhe like a worm that had been trodden under foot. Poor sad heart, no one came near to sym-

pathise with her, and he never knew how she was related to him who had just suffered. Probably she was his wife ; at any rate, in some way or other their fates were linked together, and so, added my friend, "the rule of Toryism since then tastes like blood in my mouth."

Nevertheless, as I said before, silently and secretly light was stealing in, which would soon burst into the full blaze of noon, and in a few more years great processions, in open day, would pass along the streets of our great cities with such sentiments inscribed on their banners as "Justice shall prevail!" "The voice of the people is law!" or "This thing hath pleased the King and his people!" &c.

Darkness and slavery were departing, and never more might Scotchman be trampled upon by the iron heel of despotism.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ When wild war’s deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning ;
Wi’ mony a sweet babe fatherless,
An’ mony a widow mourning.
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I’d been a lodger ;
My humble knapsack a’ my wealth,
A puir but honest sodger.”

—BURNS.



HERE was a lull in the hostilities. The warring armies had laid down their weapons, and people had begun to hope for lasting peace. The prison doors, too, had been thrown open, and long exiled men were returning to their countries and their homes. Trade had begun to revive, and on every hand things looked brighter. It was at such a time that a stately ship was seen moving slowly over the blue sea with scarcely wind enough to swell her sails. All around her was a wide waste of waters reaching to the horizon, where it showed a line of emerald light touching the opal sky. This expanse of water was broken by no sail; only the sea-bird

flying past at intervals broke the monotony of the scene.

The officer of the watch stood on the poop; the man at the wheel steered the vessel by the compass, which lifted its eloquent round face full of meaning to the nautical eye right before him. Sailors were either busily employed about their duties, or lounging over the gunwale, waiting their turn at business. Officers walked up and down the deck, smoking and chatting of the battles they had fought, or it might be thinking of home and the loved ones there, and longing to touch again their native shores. Ayahs, with knots of pretty, well-dressed children, might be seen here and there, and mothers, sisters, and wives of the officers were scattered around, some talking to their husbands, others flirting with young cadets, or sitting quietly reading. In short, the little world on board the ship was like the great world on land, with its varieties of human beings, each full of hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows.

One tall handsome-looking man in naval uniform was sitting apart from the others, watching the gambols of some children playing near. This gentleman had only come on board when they touched at the last port a few days before; being an invalid, he had kept his berth, and now for the first time had appeared.

"What is your name, my little fellow?" he asked a fine manly boy, whose ball had rolled near him while romping with some young friends and playmates.

"Arthur Harvey," answered the boy readily, "and my sister is called Lilian; is it not a pretty name?" adding, "Papa and mamma are here. Look, papa is speaking to that lame gentleman just now, and papa himself wants an arm. Poor papa, he lost it in the last battle."

The stranger started when the boy told him his name, and turned away as if in deep thought; but he felt somehow interested in the child, and though he asked no further questions he could not help watching him in his play. He saw him leading about his little sister, or running to his father, and then dashing away again, thoroughly enjoying his young life. He seemed a bold, fearless little fellow, and as the gentleman's eye followed him, he saw him climb up upon the side of the vessel, but before he could rise to remonstrate with him on his danger a sudden splash in the water, and a scream from the standers by, told that the child had fallen overboard into the mighty ocean over which they were moving majestically.

In a moment the invalid was in the water, and being an expert swimmer, had struck out for

the spot where a circle in the waters showed where the child had disappeared.

The commotion on board was great, the vessel presently hove to, and the boat was lowered with as little delay as possible.

It was a time of unspeakable anxiety, and every eye was watching, fascinated by the movements of the sailor in the water. Major Harvey and his wife were amongst the spectators, though they knew not that the child was their son. They, too, were breathless with suspense and alarm, calling for the boy they had seen but a few minutes before, and perplexed because he did not answer to their call, their eye all the while watching the bold swimmer who had reached the spot where the speck of bubbles had been seen on the calm sea.

They saw him seize the boy as he appeared on the surface, and with an effort clutch his clothes. A loud cheer rang through the ship, but again the spectators held their breath, for they saw him give a sign for help, and then begin to sink with his burden.

Another second and it would have been too late, but the boat had now reached them, and the sailors had succeeded in catching hold of the drowning man, who still clutched the child, and in a few minutes they were both safely on board the ship, where the passengers crowded round them, and the father and



"They saw him seize the boy as he appeared on the surface."—*Page 256.*

mother, for the first time, knew of the danger they had been in of losing their son.

It was discovered that the stranger, in leaping from the deck, had hurt his arm severely on some part of the rigging, which prevented him using it freely, and as his other hand held the child, they both must have perished, had not assistance come to them so speedily.

A few hours later and the boy was quite recovered, and lay on the sofa with his father and mother beside him; but his deliverer was too ill to leave his berth, for his arm was causing him great pain, and he lay tossing about in a high fever.

Major Harvey begged to be permitted to thank him for saving his son, but the medical man forbade him to be disturbed in any way.

At last, after a week in bed, the gentleman was again allowed to go on deck for a little, and the boy with a scream of delight recognised him. He had waited, poor little fellow, at his cabin door, but had been refused entrance, and was told he would only see his deliverer when he appeared on deck. In a moment he ran for his father, who hastened to meet and thank the stranger for his kindness to his son. The sick man was leaning on a part of the vessel, still looking pale and ill, and when Harvey drew near a strange expression of pain passed over his fine open brow.

"What can I say to you?" cried Major Harvey. "How can I thank you enough? but for you I might have gone to the grave mourning for my son. I owe you my child's life."

"And I owe you, Major Harvey," answered the stranger in clear, calm tones, "I owe you a blasted life, and long years of imprisonment, and separation, from those I love the best."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Harvey, starting and turning pale. "I don't know your face, but surely your voice is familiar. It cannot be, the sea cannot give up her dead, or I would say you are"——

Here the stranger interrupted him with "I am David Gordon, from Grey Craigs;" and so saying, Gordon leant back exhausted and faint.

If a thunderbolt had fallen at Harvey's feet he could not have been more astonished; and, brave soldier though he was, when he looked on the man he had so cruelly wronged, and thought how much he owed him, he bent his head on his hand and groaned in bitterness of spirit and shame.

Just then the doctor arrived, and putting his arm through that of his patient, walked him off to his cabin without further talk.

The next day, upon Gordon's appearance on deck, again Major Harvey met him to express as before his thanks for the saving of his son, and at the same time to testify to his bitter regret at the

part he had acted years before, and the injury he had done. "But how comes it," he asked, "that the report got up, Gordon, that you were drowned when the 'Fury' went down?"

"I alone was saved," he answered. "I—with the help of a spar—swam for a few hours, until picked up by an enemy's boat, only to be confined for years in a French prison, the doors of which have just been thrown open, and I am free. My friends know not of my being alive; can you tell me anything of them?"

"Alas, no!" said Harvey sadly; "I have been a wanderer too since that fatal night; but tell me, Gordon, can you forgive me? I cannot forgive myself."

"I have no right to deny forgiveness to a fellow sinner," answered Gordon; "and yet, Major Harvey, I cannot make light of the sorrow and misery you caused; you must seek forgiveness from another, a higher One than me, even the righteous God, whose laws you broke."

"Tell me, Gordon," exclaimed Harvey, "tell me if you knew whose son it was you risked your life to save?"

"I did," was the answer, "for the boy himself had told me a few minutes before; but what of that, Major Harvey, surely you would not have had me visit the father's sins on the head of his unoffending

child; besides, I only did what any one would have done in like circumstances; and had I not struck my arm against part of the rigging when leaping overboard, there would have been no great risk."

"And yet you must have hated me," said the soldier, struck by a nobility of conduct he could not have expected, or even imagined.

"Seven years in a French dungeon subdues man's passions," was the calm reply.

"After all, Gordon," said Harvey, "perhaps you have been a happier man than me. He who is sinned against is more to be envied than the sinner. The scene that moonlight night has never been a day absent from my thoughts, and it has haunted my dreams by night. I would have given all I possessed of this world's wealth to have retraced my steps, or wipe away the memory of that event; and the cry of your uncle has sounded louder in my ears than the din of battle, 'Dinna quench the only coal I have left, and make my hearth desolate.' And your look too, Gordon, haunted me; you neither sought to escape nor implored pity, but calmly and with dignity submitted to your hard fate."

Long before the ship reached the shores of Old England Gordon had recovered his health and strength, and had been able to join the party of officers on board, where he was hailed as a hero, for Harvey had generously told the tale of his sufferings and

wrongs. No man is more alive to noble conduct than a British officer, and the bearing and tone of Gordon made a deep impression on all the company, especially on Harvey himself. Arthur was his sworn ally, and Mrs. Harvey, the Lilian Arbuthnot of old, loved him as a dear friend, feeling not only that he had saved her son's life, but that he had also, by his example, made her husband a better and a wiser man.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Art thou come with the heart of thy childhood back,
The free, the pure, the kind ?
Thus murmured the trees on my homeward tract,
As they played with the mountain wind.

“ Hast thou been true to thine early love ?
Whispered my native streams ;
Doth the spirit reared amidst hill and grove
Still revere its first high dreams ?”

—F. HEMANS.



EFFIE MARTIN was walking up to the Glen for she heard that her old friend had been worse. The wind was in her face, freshening her cheeks into a glowing colour, and a rather snell wind it was, though it was in July. The green springy turf of the sea braes was glittering and trembling under the sunshine, for rain had fallen heavily the previous evening. The plash of the waves on the shore, the sparkling of the light on the water, and the red sails of sundry fishing-boats scudding before the breeze made a pretty picture for her eye to rest upon. Then, as she turned her back upon the town, with its noise and clatter, there was the sweet music

which came floating over field and forest, the wind sweeping through the trees, the whistle of the herd-boy, as he led his oxen into the pasture-field, the singing of the wood-birds, and their flutter and chirp in the hedgerows beside her, and as she drew near the farm, she was met by the pleasant voice and stir of domestic creatures, all things thus ministering to a fresh calm content in Effie's heart.

The smith's daughter had not lost much of the beauty of her youth, though her dark hair had a few threads of silver gleaming amidst its brightness; she had lost the girlish lightness of figure, but her face shone with a calm light, which only a heart at peace with God and man could give.

Something on this morning—touching her subtly—carried her back, as she walked on, to the feelings and hopes of her early youth—some old happiness. It was in vain she tried to school herself into sorrow, for she knew Uncle John's days were numbered; but in spite of her schooling, a calm joy came welling up into her heart, even though she thought of her sailor lover in his watery grave. "O Davie, Davie!" she cried to herself, "why should I feel happy when you are sleeping, my beloved, where the waters are flowing over your young, fair head?"

Life is full of such strange coincidences; we wonder, but we cannot explain. How often, on meeting unexpectedly with some long-lost friend,

we remember that with a curious wilfulness we insisted on bringing up to memory, the face we were soon to see, and this we call an odd chance, for we can in no other way account for the thing.

Through much suffering Effie had become one of those characters on which every one leant. Some women seem to pass through a discipline which develops in them a character of self-reliance and control, making them the helpers rather than the helped,—who take up such a lot as their calling, and steadily and uncomplainingly bear the burden.

Her father needed her, and Uncle John, and I know not who else besides, and so that day before she left for the Glen she saw her father made comfortable, and left him in charge of her cousin Tibbie, now a widow, who resided with them.

Uncle John was in bed when she entered, and he seemed glad to have her with him.

"Ye'll stay wi' me the day, Effie," he said, as she threw aside her cloak and bonnet, "and Mysie will get a rest. No that I need much attention; but, oh! I'm glad to see you; you're as welcome as the flowers in May."

"I will," said Effie; "for I have left my father all right, and intended to stay for two or three days if ye needed me." And so Effie proceeded to shake up his pillows, and place them more softly under his head. Then she pulled the curtain back from the

window near his bed, and put up the sash to let in the fresh breeze, the sweet songs of birds, and the coo of the ring-dove, with the drowsy murmur of the burn flowing past the house; and to let him see the green fields, and the rocks and trees with the ocean sparkling and quivering in the sunbeams.

Uncle John looked patient and pleased; the hard lines had long ago been softened down in his nature, and with his Bible on his pillow he was quite content.

"I feel, Effie," said the old man, as she sat by his bed, "I feel that this is a gentle giving way of nature. The Lord is loosening the pins of the tabernacle one by one, and taking them down so quietly I hardly know what He is doing. I could just have liked one thing before I die, an' that was to have seen my laddie again."

Effie felt how keenly, even in death, his heart was clinging to the idea, strong in him all along, that Davie was not dead, and she would not just now discourage it, so she only answered—

"Never mind, uncle; you'll meet him in heaven."

"Effie," continued her friend, not hearing or not attending to the words she had spoken—"Effie, I hae made a will, and left you this place and everything I have in the world; but when Davie comes hame, Effie, then you'll hae it between you, for it's borne in my mind that the sea couldna drown him."

"And you're right, Uncle John," said a voice that made them both start, and in another moment a tall sun-browned man stood by the bed.

The old man lifted up his hands in astonishment and joy, and then said, in a feeble shaking voice, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive. Lord, now I am ready to depart!"

Effie grasped the bedpost with both hands, speechless and trembling with suppressed emotion.

"Effie, Effie!" cried Gordon, in the same tone of voice in which he had uttered her name years before, when he asked her to be his wife—"Effie, do you no bid me welcome? Hae ye forgotten all we were to each other lang syne?"

But Effie, bewildered and shy, durst not look up into the eyes so full of affection bending down on her, and still remained speechless.

"Uncle John," asked Davie somewhat alarmed, "has Effie forgotten me?"

"Na, na, Davie," answered the old man gladly and proudly; "Effie kept true to you—though she thought you dead, true as she had been in life—and for your sake she has been a kind bairn to me." And so saying, he took a hand of each and joined them together, saying, "The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless you baith!"

And so the two long parted were united again by the dying bed of their old friend.

Davie in a few words told them of his escape from shipwreck, and of his long confinement in the French prison, his release, and the meeting with Harvey on the road home, to all which Uncle John and Effie listened with breathless attention.

Soon the joyful news spread through the town of the return of the long-lost and deeply-mourned-for sailor, and many a hearty shake of the hand and welcome greeting awaited him.

The only thing that damped the joy of this glad return was the thought that Uncle John was nearing his end; but the old man himself was so willing to go, and so thankful that he had been spared to welcome back his long-lost child, that he could only say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

As Effie and the sailor waited by his bed, the old man told them many interesting particulars of his parents and his childhood which had never crossed his lips before. He and Davie's father had been cousins; he had loved and courted Davie's mother, who, on the eve of her marriage with him, forsook him for his cousin, a sailor. Not long were they married until the man heartlessly left his wife and child to live as they best might, and soon afterwards perished in a storm. Then Uncle John told—and even then a tear stood in his sunken eye—

how the poor widow sent for him to the remote fishing village where she had been trying to obtain a scanty subsistence for herself and child, and where she was dying of a broken heart; how she had placed her son under his care, and how he had watched over the few last weeks of her life, and when she died had buried her, and buried all hopes of husband and father in her lone grave by the bleak sea, adding softly, "But naething could disturb ye there, puir Ailie—neither wind nor waves—for your broken heart was at rest at last." Then, turning to Davie, he said, "Your mother wasna true to me, laddie, but I hae tried to be true to you. However, mony a time she mourned o'er her treatment o' me, and said I was to meet her in heaven, which she hoped to win for the sake o' Him who had died to save sinners, even the chief."

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Thou hast sworn by thy God, my Jeanie,
By that lily-white hand o’ thine,
And by a’ the stars in the heavens,
That thou wad aye be mine !
And I hae sworn by my God, my Jeanie,
And by that kind heart o’ thine,
By a’ that’s fair around us,
That thou shalt aye be mine.”

—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.



R. and Miss Ramsay, now grown old and grey, were amongst the first to welcome Davie back to his home. And oh, how glad were they to receive the Bible of their brother, and hear the accounts of his reformed life. “I knew,” said Miss Ramsay, while the tears trickled down her cheeks; “I knew the son of so many prayers could not be lost. God is good, if we would only trust Him more. His word never yet failed.” But no one rejoiced more cordially over the sailor’s return than did the smith, now nearly bedridden; and often would he go over tales of Davie’s youth and his boyish pranks, and the love of his

dead wife for him—the wife he felt he would soon meet again, and whose gentle kindness he had missed so sorely as he trod alone through the rough ways of the world. Neither must Mysie be forgotten. She had early prophesied of his greatness; and though his manly ambition had been checked by years of captivity, she and every one felt that David Gordon was a great and noble man, in the true sense of the word. The gold had been cast into the furnace until the dross was taken from it; and though he had given up hopes of rising in his profession and gaining a name on the records of fame, yet he had a work to do in a humbler sphere, and all knew and felt he would do it well. The property to which he would succeed at the death of his relative was an important one, and he would have enough of employment on his hands to superintend the miners and workmen.

A few weeks after his return Davie took his place beside Effie and Mysie, as they watched by the dying bed of Uncle John. It was sad and solemn, but they knew he must leave them—it was man's appointed lot—that he had been given long life, and now he was going to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe. They had been watching all night, thinking every hour would be his last; and when the early dawn of the morning paled out of the midnight, and the stars melted away as the

first streak appeared in the eastern sky, they were still watching. Tender, womanly touches put all things straight, and quiet hands were ready to supply every want. Uncle John lay with a calm contentedness in his face, looking on the two so dear to him tending him so carefully—the two fond hearts, parted so long, meeting at last in the chamber of the dying.

And the feeling of the two, how pleasant! They could do little else but converse in subdued tones; but the joy was great to be near one another—to be enabled together to give one so dear to both aid and comfort, and Effie almost chid the selfishness of joy which crept into her heart. Davie, too, would sit and watch her in silence, which in itself was sweet repose, his eyes following all her movements with an eagerness which could not be satisfied.

The warm August day broadened and deepened while they watched. It was the Sabbath, and a Sabbath peace lay upon the land. There was a hush and quiet in the house, for the King of Terrors was coming, though robbed of his dart.

The church bells rang through the still air, up and down the valley they sent their sweet chimes calling the six days' weary pilgrims to a rest on the seventh. The people went dropping past, the walkers bathing their naked dusty feet in

the clear burn before they donned their stockings and shoes, to be more decent for the house of God.

By and by the worshippers returning told that the services were over, and the afternoon passed—but still the old man lingered. Then came on night; a night that was to know no morrow to the sufferer. Slowly, flickering, brightening a little at last with a parting ray—and then as the shadows deepened, there came a whisper from the parting lips—and as they bent to listen, they heard, “Ailie, Ailie, I’m coming. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And so with the light of parting day the light of human life departed also, and there was a great calm.

That there might be no delay in the marriage of Davie and Effie had been Uncle John’s dying request, and therefore, shortly after the funeral, the wedding day was fixed.

The day dawned with its crisp breeze bearing on it a taste of the salt sea full of bracing health and sunshine as well. Again, as it had been on that day years before, when Davie and Effie had been betrothed, corn-fields lay under the low green hills, bending their golden load under the busy reapers’ hands, and orchard and forest were in full foliage. The two felt in harmony with nature on this the morning of the day that was to unite their hands and hearts for ever.

God implanted in man's breast, even in Paradise, this want for some one to love and cherish, and without which he would feel defrauded and impoverished, and would soon harden and sour; and to woman, no less, had He given the need for support and comfort, even as the ivy sought the help of a stronger stay on which it might cling and grow up heavenward. And so surely on a marriage such as theirs, a holy, true love marriage, a double blessing would rest.

With the joy and brightness of her hopes had come back to Effie much of the beauty of her youth, nay, something even better, for there was a calm, patient look brought there by affliction, which her youth wanted, and she looked a grand woman with her still rich complexion, broad and intelligent brow and serene lips, as she stood by Davie's side in the homely cottage and vowed to be a faithful and loving wife to him. And Davie, now known as Captain Gordon, seemed no unworthy mate for her, in his handsome uniform, his brown hair still clustering round his ample forehead, and his eyes, the old eyes of Davie as a boy, still looking bright and intelligent. Arthur Harvey was groomsman, and his sister Lilian bridesmaid. That old holiday at Grey Craigs had its bright picturesqueness and courteous ceremonies; the poor and the rich mingled together in the friendliest

terms. The Ramsays and Jessie Grieve and her husband, with Major Harvey and his gentle wife.

The ceremony was in the old Presbyterian fashion, and the happy pair left soon after for the Glen.

"I will come down for you in a few days, father," said Effie, as she parted with him to walk with her bridegroom alone to their home, adding, "You will live beside us in the little cottage, and Tibbie will take as much care of you as I could do, then my husband and I will be near you and see you constantly"—husband—she lingered over the word lovingly—she who had never dreamed of any other life than one of loneliness, and over which had hung the pale shadow of that early lost love. Her heart melted with the sense of content, and she wept softly, but joyfully, as taking Davie's arm she leant on it firm and fast—the arm that would be her stay and guide through life, until on the path which they had now entered together one would first fail, and the mourner would tread meekly alone until they were reunited in the land of everlasting rest.

My story is almost now at an end; little further may be added, save that the families of Briary Park and the Glen being fast friends, were afterwards more closely united by the marriage of Arthur Harvey with Effie Gordon of the Glen. They lived in happier days than did their fathers, who for fear of

the enemy found "the highways unoccupied, and the travellers walking through bye-ways." Now each man could sit under his vine and fig tree, none making him afraid, for there was no longer heard "the noise of archers in the place of the drawing of water."

THE END.

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